DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 098 572 CS 201 646

AUTHOR Eppstein, John, Ed.
TITLE Television and World Affairs Teaching in Schools; Report of the Atlantic Study Conference on Education (9th, Bordeaux, Sept. 3-9, 1972).
PUB DATE Sep 72
NOTE 39p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Conference Reports; *Inservice Teacher Education; Mass Media; Political Attitudes; Secondary School Students; *Student Attitudes; *Television Viewing; *World Affairs

ABSTRACT

The principal papers read at the ninth conference in a series of Biennial Atlantic Study Conferences on Education, which was organized at the University of Bordeaux at Talence to benefit those concerned with the teaching of world affairs and social science in the secondary schools of the Western world, are included in this report. Titles of papers presented are: "Television--For or against Education" by the Atlantic Information Centre for Teachers, "Politics and Television" by Geoffrey Johnson Smith, "The Influence of Current Affairs Broadcasting upon Pupil Attitudes Towards Politics" by Professor Judith V. Torney, "Current Affairs Coverage on Television: The French Experience" by Senator Louis Gros and Christian Bernadac, "Current Affairs Coverage on Television: The British Experience" by Phillip Whitehead and Julian Critchley, "The Impact of Televised Information on Teachers and Pupils" by Lucien Geminard, "Can School and Television Complement one another?" by Recteur Henri Gauthier, and "General Debate: Impressions of a Round Table Discussion." Conclusions consist of three group reports: "The Problem in the Classroom," "The Problem for the Television Producer," and "The Objectivity Factor." (SW)

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TELEVISION AND WORLD AFFAIRS TEACHING IN SCHOOLS

Report of
the 9th Atlantic Study Conference on Education organized at
Bordeaux
by the Atlantic Information Centre for Teachers
3 – 9 September, 1972

Edited by JOHN EPPSTEIN

as 201 646

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Published three times a year by The Atlantic Information Centre for Teachers.
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Introduction

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This conference was the ninth in a series of Biennial Atlantic Study Conferences on Education, the purpose of which is to be of service to those concerned with the teaching of world affairs and social science in the secondary schools of the Western world. It was organized by the Atlantic Information Centre for Teachers, an independent body governed by a committee of educators from the fifteen N.A.T.O. countries and met, thanks to the kindness of the municipal and university authorities, in the Campus of the University of Bordeaux at Talence.

Its members fell into two groups. On the one hand there were active teachers, inspectors and directors of education, including specialists in the use of audio-visual media, some nominated by their Ministries of Education, some by teachers' associations, some by national organizations of the Atlantic Treaty Association. On the other hand there were directors and officers of television or broadcasting services in France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands, a representative of the International Broadcasting Institute and several politicians with television experience. Of these Mr. Geoffrey Johnson Smith, M.P., then the British Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Defence for the Army, himself an experienced broadcaster, gave the opening address on Television and Politics.

The French contingent was naturally the most numerous. Their contributions to the discussion were of the highest order especially those of Sénateur Louis Gros, President of the Cultural Affairs Commission of the Senate, Monsieur Louis François and Monsieur Lucien Géminard, General Inspectors of the Ministry of National Education, and Monsieur René la Borderie, Director of the Centre de Recherche et de Documentation Pédagogiques at Bordeaux.

For the admirable arrangements made for the sessions and accommodation of the Conference and the generous hospitality offered to its members in the city and the countryside we were particularly indebted to Professor Georges Portmann, the distinguished surgeon who is President of the Association Française pour la Communauté Atlantique and until lately Vice-President of the Senate; Madame Jacqueline Néré, the French Vice-President of the Atlantic Information Centre for Teachers and Monsieur R. Paulian, Rector of the Academy which includes the Universities of Bordeaux and of the Antilles. Maître Deymes, the Deputy Mayor kindly welcomed and entertained the Conference on behalf of the Mayor, Monsieur Chaban-Delmas, who was at Munich for the Olympic Games.

This report contains the principal papers read at the Conference, impressions of the general "Round Table" debate and three reports of conclusions reached. It does not attempt to record all that was said at the different sessions, but Dr. Judith Torney has revised her contribution on a basic topic of the Conference "The Influence of Current Affairs Broadcasting upon Pupil Attitudes towards Politics", in the light of the discussion which it provoked.

The conference attacked what is perhaps the most compelling aspect of the teaching of world affairs in schools today, namely the impact of televised news, comments and documentaries upon boys and girls and the problems which this poses for their teachers. It is of vital importance because, while the study of current affairs is only one, and that often a marginal item in the crowded school programme, children at school today will have spent nine or ten years of their lives looking at T.V. at home. A recent French enquiry showed that children of 14 spend, on the average, 27 hours a week in class and 27 hours in front of the "box". The effect of this instant supply of audio-visual information about events in all parts of the world tends to make television, in contrast to the school, the accepted source of reality and truth. Yet, it is the purpose of education to prepare the student for life as an intelligent citizen of his country and of the world: the teacher, therefore, as Professor Portmann emphasized at the start, has the difficult task of relating this mélange of information – much of it sensational – to essential values, and to develop among his pupils a sense of balance and a critical faculty.

An important fact which underlay much of the discussion is that while teachers and parents are primarily concerned in this respect with the impact of television on children, T.V. news and information programmes are not aimed at the school but at the general public. At the same time the quality of the programme is a legitimate concern of the educator and, as Professor Henningsen was the first to argue, everything depends upon the producer of the programmes and consequently upon the choice of producers. Many aspects of the distinctive functions and difficulties both of telecasters and teachers are considered in the contributions recorded in this report; and some conclusions which commanded general agreement will be found in the reports of three groups adopted by the Conference at its final session (see pages 32-36); one on the problems of the television producer, one on the teacher's problems, and one on the thorny question of objectivity.

There are, however, a few salient features of the question which deserve particular attention. One is that teaching in school is geared to the intelligence of children of different ages, from infancy to adolescence, whereas T.V. news and commentaries are broadcast indiscriminately for viewers of all ages. Another is that the day's events are shown in a hurry, without any regard to their historical context, for which even the newspaper provides some opportunity of explanation.

Another – and this, of course, is the main source of anxiety from the educational standpoint – is that, excitement being the first concern of the T.V. reporter as of the journalist, violence, conflict and crisis generally have priority in the news and commentaries, thus unintentionally giving a distorted picture, for the peaceful occupations of most people, most of the time in most countries are without "news value". Violence in the news is also sandwiched between an increasing diet of violence in T.V. entertainment films.

As against such obvious criticisms, this Conference gave an opportunity for school teachers to realize the great pressure under which T.V. producers work and how difficult it is for them to make a fair selection and

presentation of the news. Monsieur Christian Bernadac of the O.R.T.F. spoke of the avalanche of sensational films from news agencies (see page 21) which descends upon the Television Editor day by day. The report on the practical problems of television production (page 33) shows that many of those concerned are vividly aware of their responsibilities.

On the other hand a purely negative attitude of the educator to T.V. would be quite unavailing. It is an important phenomenon of the modern world with which he has to live; and every effort should be made to take advantage of the new and vivid interest in the peoples and events of other lands which it gives to young viewers, an interest which classroom teaching about geography, history or social, political and economic subjects could never arouse to the same extent. Hence the dilemma faced at the concluding round table discussion of the Bordeaux Conference. Can there be marriage or must there be divorce between such contrasting agencies as television information and the school – the one concerned with the particular, the other with the general; the one with disorganized news, the other with organized teaching; the one lacking in depth, the other devoted to lasting values; the one temporal, the other eternal in its finalities? It is a debate in which the readers of these pages will, we hope, continue to engage.

J.E.

The Atlantic Information Centre for Teachers is grateful to Associated Television, Thames Television, Trident Television and the N.A.T.O. Information Service for financial help which has made the publication of this Report possible.

The organization of the Conference was assisted by grants-in-aid from the Municipality of Bordeaux and the N.A.T.O. Information Service.

Television – For or Against Education

General background paper, prepared by the Atlantic Information Centre for Teachers

1. Without going all the way with McLuhan, it cannot be denied that in many ways the world has been shrunk by the media to the proportion of a village. The teaching profession in many countries has met this challenge by expanding its responsibility in the area of international education, by accepting that tomorrow's citizen will be increasingly affected by events in other parts of the globe. New curricula are being introduced widely with the intention of illustrating this new interdependence, and attempts are made in the schools to equip the rising generation with the intellectual tools needed to enable them to understand what goes on in their own communities and in the world at large.

2. The mass media, and above all television, are among the major formative influences on the populations of industrialized societies. They do more than complement the education systems by providing useful specialized teaching tools. In particular, television as a medium for conveying information is in many ways much more powerful than any education system could hope to be. It is virtually all-pervasive, and the images of current affairs at home and abroad which it projects through its presentation of news and current affairs represent for many people the major source of information about what is happening in the world today. Television has joined the school and the home in a triumvirate of influence.

3. The responsibilities of Educational T.V. are relatively clearly defined and fulfilled by those concerned. It could, however, be argued that the educational responsibilities of those concerned with the presentation of every-day news and current affairs programmes, shown often at peak viewing times, are much greater. There are many problems which have to be faced in this context. First of all, journalists and other media men, though aware of their responsibilities as conveyors of information, do not regard themselves primarily as educators, and they are subject to pressures and tensions which normally do not affect the professional teacher. Furthermore, they are above all in the news business. The sensational and the exceptional inevitably appeals to the reporter. "Dog bites man" is of much less news interest than "man bites dog". Some would argue that if television were to be believed, the total of dogs bitten by men far exceeds the number of men bitten by dogs!

4. As a visual medium, T.V. has its own problems. By its very nature it has to concentrate on items which have an immediate visual impact. Some would say that it distorts by emphasizing the dramatic and violent aspect and that in doing so it overstresses the crisis element. These critics may underestimate the T.V. producer's job, which is to attract and hold his audience. Nevertheless, it can be argued that on many occasions a less than true picture emerges. This is not intended as an accusation – the distorted image, if it exists, is rarely falsified on purpose. But to some it would seem that only part of the true situation is presented at times, and the part which is not shown is more often than not as significant as the visual drama on the screen. In other words, it is not sufficient to show a riot in country X – to complete the picture the *absence* of rioting in other areas of country X, or indeed in other countries, should also be shown. Of course, T.V. programmes are not – and cannot be made in this way.

5. What can the teacher do to rectify this? He may face a class, many of whom have seen the riots in country X on their television screens the night before. He has to explain that there is perhaps more to these riots than meets the eye; that the reasons are perhaps more complicated than the necessarily compressed and possibly oversimplified broadcast commentary has led the viewer to believe. He has the job of convincing his class that life in country X does not consist of riots alone. All this the teacher has to do in the humdrum environment of the classroom, often without the practical means of countering the visual impact of the television programme in question. This is not an easy task; and perhaps the media can in some way help the teacher to rectify the situation. Educational T.V., pure and simple, is not necessarily the answer – for many children it does not carry the same conviction as the more glamorous "regular" programmes projected by well-known personalities; it is just another teacher.

6. A related problem is thrown up by the argument about objectivity. Not all T.V. programmes concern themselves with instant news – many try to penetrate more deeply into selected topics. However, they often take sides, and there are those who would argue that this represents a misuse of the power of the medium. For example, if an "in depth" programme seems to argue that the riots in X are to be condemned, the teacher will find it difficult to arouse his pupils' critical faculties and to get them to see the other side's point of view and vice-versa. Perhaps this underestimates both the teacher's and the pupils' ability. It also raises a philosophical question – about the true nature of objectivity and the validity of value judgments which this conference is unlikely to solve. Yet "objective" information is as difficult as "objective" teaching; and "neutral" television is as unsatisfying as "neutral" teaching: the young are more likely to respect a communicator who openly declares his own values, even though they may reject them. This does not alter the fact that it is the constant duty of the teacher to encourage an honest appreciation of the motives activating each side in every civil or international conflict. This is a principle which in democratic societies is often, but not always, respected by T.V.

7. There is also the interaction between T.V. and politics. This operates at various levels. First, there is the concern that state broadcasting systems tend to serve the interest of the party in power, and that commercial T.V. simply serves the interest of the advertiser and the investors. In practice, this is an oversimplification – in free societies, the media have tried to live up to an honourable tradition of independence, although at times this has not been easy. Certainly, the educator has a duty here to support the media in their quest for independence.

On the other hand, the danger of trivialization is always present. An alleged problem here is the diminution of the politician, who has to face a probing and sometimes hostile interviewer on television who in the eyes of the uninformed audience assumes equal and often greater importance than the man he is interviewing. The man, who has to act in "great matters of state" is diminished in stature, and the media man is exalted above his station – so the argument goes. It was Chekhov who described the critic as "a mould on the surface of society" – many politicians must be tempted to apply the same description to the "personality" interviewer. What can or should the teacher do to underpin the credibility of both the political and broadcasting systems under these circumstances?

8. The teacher, however, has an additional responsibility faced, as he is, with the present revolution in communications technology. He must not only teach for the present, but also for the future and he should be equipped to examine and explain the future implications of this revolution for social and cultural change, economic growth and political integration, nationally and internationally. The spread and availability of images of other cultures may indeed assist in reducing the ethnocentric character of what is taught in schools, and in the long term a new and more powerful concept of a shared world may grow out of the habit of shared images. Perhaps the new internationalism can be built upon an acceptance of cultural diversity and common concern. This is an educational process which television has already begun to pioneer.

9. Both television and education are part of the infrastructure which serves society. Much attention has recently been paid to the socialising role of education; more should now be devoted to television's potential as an educative factor. Perhaps television presents yet another example of the gap between technological progress on one hand and man's inability to manage it on the other.

10. A EUR.N.A.C.* report on "Television and the Society of the '70's" published earlier this year states that the average child now growing up in our societies will, by the time he is 65 years old, have spent approximately nine years of his life before a television screen in a peculiarly passive attitude. Television has a duty, the report says, to educate the viewer for life in a technological society, and it must begin by communicating with the public about itself.

Television is essentially an international and internationalized medium, and it is therefore particularly fitted to lead in the work of international education. It can do so not only in its role as an audio-visual teaching aid, but perhaps more effectively by fulfilling its function as today's most effective mass communicator. A dialogue between teachers and people working in television can only help to achieve this aim.

11. This paper does not suggest any solution or practical policies. Its attempt to define the issues is by no means comprehensive. It was prepared by the staff of the Atlantic Information Centre for Teachers merely with the intention of putting before the conference participants some of the aspects of the problem which led to the choice of the theme of the 9th Atlantic Study Conference on Education in the hope that it might stimulate discussion at Bordeaux.

*Television and the Society of the 70's
published by the European-North American Committee, Avenue de Tervueren 265, 1150 Bruxelles.

Politics and Television

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By Geoffrey Johnson Smith, M.P.

The relationship between broadcasting and politicians can be summed up in a few words – it is a love-hate relationship. To begin with the love side of that relationship; politicians love talking to people, especially to broadcasting people because they provide the means of talking to millions. And broadcasting people, or rather political broadcasters, like talking to politicians because it provides them with the authentic background which enables them in their turn to talk to millions. So we each need one another – it would seem the basis for the perfect marriage.

Now for the hate side of the relationship. Political broadcasters and producers of current affairs programmes are sometimes jealous of politicians because they have too much power. They get angry with them because politicians can be arrogant and patronising and, as political broadcasting contains people who are themselves politicians *manqués*, they often believe that they can do the job better than the real politicians. My broadcasting friends find it difficult to understand why it is that so many politicians, whom they can like and admire personally in the privacy of their own homes, should undergo such a metamorphosis when they get into a studio and behave like so many buffoons, by arguing and ranting in such a manner that leads them to conclude that politicians either have contempt for their fellow men or are intellectually sub-normal.

As for the politicians, many are jealous of the broadcasters, not because they have too much power, but because they have too much power without responsibility. They suspect that tricks are played on them and that programmes are biased, which often means that programmes are not loaded in the way the politicians would like them to be. They complain that there is never enough time given to deploy an argument. They dislike interviewers and regard them as a new breed of media men set up by producers, not to elicit the facts, but too frequently to trip up politicians and to make them foolish in the eyes of the public.

Some interviewers adopt a hectoring tone: they interrupt, they are disrespectful, they behave like lawyers cross-examining a criminal in court. Others with charm and guile lull the interviewee into believing that they agree with him and then pop one of those unanswerable "when did you stop beating your wife" kind of questions and give him 30 seconds to reply. "Why not tell us the questions in advance?" ask the politicians, and many interviewers positively refuse, pretending that the interview is unscripted. The conclusion drawn by politicians is that the main purpose of the interview is to catch them out.

It is not surprising, therefore, with these dubious techniques combined with the lack of time to give a considered reply, that many a politician falls flat on his face in full view of the public and shuns broadcasters ever after.

The wonder is that a politician ever sets foot in a studio at all. The reason for doing so is the same as that which causes the love-hate relationship with broadcasters – the knowledge that they cannot do without broadcasting.

Years ago a loud voice and money was all you needed to attract a large audience; now you need T.V. as well. As a result the relationship between the broadcaster and the politician is a complex one. It does not, as I shall show, provide the promise of much improvement. Not, I hasten to add, that this worries me much. There should be tension between those who work in the media and the politicians.

So no politician can any longer ignore T.V. and no party can dispense with the need to deploy its case in television terms. Television is not for political pygmies, either, – a crutch for the least talented. Long before television arrived statesmen of the calibre of Churchill and Roosevelt had cottoned on to the new power given them by the radio scientist: the power to reach out into millions of homes without time-consuming physical effort and to give millions of people simultaneously a political message. It was this last point, the effect of a message being concentrated in so many homes at one particular moment, which politicians found so intriguing! It was a great new power – or rather an old power re-born. The last time this had happened was in the old days of Athenian democracy.

Dr. Goebbels, Hitler's propagandist, had also sized up the novel power of radio. Radio had speed – it spread news more quickly than any newspaper. Radio could describe in word and sound an event as it happened more dramatically than any newspaper. And before him there was that American reporter's description of the burning of the German airship Hindenburg. A great occasion – the arrival of its first commercial flight in the United States, the dawn of a new age of air travel. And then suddenly it burst into flames in front of thousands who had arrived to acclaim it and burned with increasing and terrifying speed in front of all these people who could do nothing, and the machine and its occupants died a terrible death. The reporter described it all, his voice sobbed as he realized that the airship was doomed, and millions heard the voice, the sob and the crackling of the flames.

Radio's word pictures had more dramatic appeal than the next day's tabloid's headlines. On radio you could hear for yourself what was happening, who was speaking and what was being said. It was therefore more truthful than a newspaper – or was it? Not that that worried Dr. Goebbels very much. What he realized was that radio made it possible to repeat a theme with great frequency, to concentrate it on a few million homes and he believed that even if a message was based on half truths or lies, provided it used the new medium expertly enough it could dispel doubts about his political master. It could do something else; it could sow suspicion of other people's motives and create a feeling of national solidarity.

Then came T.V. which added picture to sound – an extra dimension which proved just as suitable to the politicians of the T.V. age, like Charles de Gaulle and Harold Macmillan, as it did to Jack Kennedy, who was a

child of this electronic age. All of them have been expert practitioners of the art of projecting themselves. To a lesser extent they were successful in projecting their policies.

Despite the success politicians have made of T.V. and the debt they owe to it, T.V. has yet to acquire a high degree of respectability among politicians. Some politicians claim T.V. promotes superficiality, and the politician with the glib phrase. They have a point. Politicians are concerned with ideas and ideas are expressed in talk. In an article in the September 1972 edition of *The Spectator* British journalist Peregrine Worsthorne writes "T.V. talk programmes are str[illegible]e affairs but they all seem to me to have one thing in common: the level of conversation or debate is always very much lower than we might expect from the intellectual level of those taking part . . . There is something about a T.V. studio, in short, that makes us all, conversationally speaking, below par."

Politicians also are inclined to think that T.V. puts an emphasis on being photogenic. When Nixon appeared with Kennedy in that famous confrontation he looked a loser. If politicians tend to look upon their T.V. appearances in vote-getting terms, as they so often do, and thus devalue the medium, it is also true to say that they can be aided and abetted by the T.V. producer. Some T.V. producers like bold, brash and brisk politicians, because they are good performers. They keep the viewer on the edge of his seat. They don't waste time, and time is precious. They get on with what they have to say and that helps to keep the viewers entertained. For we should never forget that T.V. Current Affairs producers work in what is basically regarded by the viewers as a medium of entertainment.

Political programmes are inevitably programmes for minority audiences. Occasionally one hits the jackpot. But mostly, if they are to survive in the schedules they must, in an ambiance of entertainment, attract a wide audience, and this they do by contriving situations which we have come to call the "Politics of Confrontation." British politicians, used to the cut and thrust of the House of Commons where the two main political parties sit opposite one another, take to T.V. confrontations rather well. And when they do it well, they make entertaining viewing and the radio of thought to political cant can be surprisingly high. T.V. discussions and interviews can be great fun, but it is not what politics is about. However, if politicians are saying, as some do, that the superficiality can be overcome and substantial information imparted if the interviews were longer and less disputatious, or if more serious discussions were arranged, they are, I am afraid, going to be disappointed. I have the feeling that the audience would too easily get bored, as much by the contrast with the more entertaining programmes as by the difficulty even quite intelligent people have in following the expression of thought on T.V.

But can it not be counter-argued that T.V. through its news bulletins, its special programmes on important national topics has had a profound effect on people's attitudes? Certainly this is very true when it comes to the projection of individual politicians. In fact T.V. personalises politics. Politics in T.V. terms too often is seen as a question of personalities.

T.V., to be fair, has also made its impact on public opinion with its coverage of events. I have often been told by my American friends that the T.V. coverage of the Vietnam war did as much as anything to divide American opinion on the wisdom of pursuing that war. In Britain the news bulletins showing thousands of starving children in Biafra undoubtedly produced a huge wave of sympathy, and the Government's policy of refusing to back Biafra was assailed on all sides. I wonder, however, how lasting this kind of effect is. It certainly appeals to the emotions, but for how long? Americans who have seen on their screens the effects of I.R.A. terrorist bombing in Belfast tearing a hole in a street which could have been Saigon may be excused if their reaction is one of indifference. Belfast today, Vietnam, Biafra, Bangladesh yesterday — the victims of floods, fires, earthquakes — the scenes are all too familiar in our living rooms. In my view their frequency has already dulled our senses and they have lost much of their capacity to shock. Too often, they leave us, if we are frank, with a shrug and an attitude of "there is nothing I can do about it anyway".

Alternatively and paradoxically, T.V. when it is not inducing a state of apathy, can induce in the viewer a state of mind which is even more dangerous — frustration. Time and again T.V. tells us, shows us what is wrong with our world, the smog, the road accidents, the violence. It is long on diagnosis, short in therapy. The effect can be to leave us in a sullen or blind rage — rage at our helplessness — which translates itself into protest, a demand for action now, this minute. T.V. is also a restless, unsettling medium, not solely because it is so concerned to record social, political and economic distress. The men and women who work in T.V. make their own contribution. They add their dash of vinegar and sprinkle of pepper to the scene.

On the whole the producers tend to be young and radical. It is a young man's profession. They are attracted to new ideas, to new subjects, new crises which pose many unsettling questions and provide as yet few satisfactory answers. The question that lies behind so many programmes is: what is wrong with? What is wrong with our highways? What is wrong with our hospitals? What is wrong with our defence? And so on.

To be fair many T.V. documentaries are first class, objective and very necessary explanations of public issues. Much of T.V.'s output, however, heightens tension between the viewer and the world he lives in. The need that is felt by the broadcasters to exploit T.V.'s power of immediacy, like their radio forebears, to maximise the audience, to keep ahead of the newspapers, to take you to the latest disaster, all this adds to the tension. And the frustration to which I referred tends to develop a cynicism towards the ability of Government and institutions to solve our problems. The cynicism in turn generates a wish to drop out of society or overthrow it.

These trends which exist in modern society are worrying to us all and especially, in a rather personal way, to the politicians who, after all, form an important part of the Establishment which is under attack.

And so I come to what I call the distortion factor in T.V. as it affects political life. Vietnam provides a classic example. Most of what we have seen has been gathered by American sources. It was the first virtually uncensored war, we were told, ever fought. True, of course, from the point of view of filming the American part in it but from the point of view of the other side facilities were *very* restricted. There was no freedom in the Vietcong areas, for instance, either to film or to interview those who suffered at the hands of the Vietcong.

In the democracies examples of injustice, oppression, cruelty even are seen and discussed on the news and in documentaries, but effective coverage of similar occurrences in Russia, China or East European countries is non-existent. The facilities are simply not provided. Solzhenitsyn can smuggle out a letter. A newspaper correspondent can give his impressions but television's world reporting is dreadfully lop-sided. We see only the democracies under the microscope with all their tragedies and shortcomings. The effect of all this on our self-esteem and self-confidence is a factor which I do not think we can ignore. Certainly it is an aspect of the way we handle the media which the Soviet Union and protesting groups are not slow to exploit. And we have seen an escalation of the politics of demonstration. Naturally I recognize that there is no easy solution. Disasters are news, mistakes should not always be covered up. A T.V. news bulletin in Britain which allowed space for a story based on the fact that no bombs had exploded or shots been fired in Ulster on a particular day would be hard put to it to fill out the time allocated. But the challenge is there.

To conclude, if politicians recognize T.V.'s limitation – that it is not, for example, necessarily more powerful than the printed word or a substitute for the inspiration of a teacher – then they will begin to lose some of their fear and suspicion. Something else will have to happen if fear and suspicion are to diminish. The nervousness of some producers, the sensitivity of politicians can, I think, also be traced to the fear that at peak hours the audience is spread over too few channels and this gives an importance in our national life to programmes which they do not deserve. This can stultify innovation and curtail controversy for fear of giving offence to this or that pressure group. This is not a healthy situation either for television, for government or for the people. And so I would argue for more T.V. and not less.

We meet here from many nations because we believe that one of the by-products will be better international understanding. There is surely not one of us here who believes that T.V. could not play a more educative, informative and imaginative part internationally than it has so far. The need is pressing, for year by year through N.A.T.O., through the European Common Market we are creating and strengthening new international institutions which place more demands on sovereign states and ask for greater understanding on the part of their peoples. "Nation shall speak unto nation", runs part of the motto of the B.B.C. But this is not the case with television. To show the Olympics and the World Cup every four years or such feats as "Jeux sans Frontières" or that great cultural treat, the Eurovision Song Contest, is not worthy of the intellects in television. We shall need to raise the level of T.V., to be more ambitious for it and that is a job that none of us should neglect, least of all the politicians.

The Influence of Current Affairs Broadcasting upon Pupil Attitudes Toward Politics

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The transformation of the fragmented political attitudes of young children into the often very adult concerns of secondary school students is a topic of great interest but of few uncontested conclusions. Three perspectives on this problem will be examined, with stress on the implications of each for understanding the role of current affairs broadcasting in attitude formation and change.

The first focus will be on the political attitudes of youth as documented by a large volume of research during the past ten years on political socialization and civic education. This interest originated with political scientists who were seeking to understand how well established political systems ensured the development of supportive attitudes in citizens of the next generation. The first section of the paper will be a brief overview of political socialization research to indicate its major dimensions.

The second perspective is a more psychological one. What are the processes by which attitudes are formed and changed? How are the mass media uniquely related to these processes? How does the school exert its influence on attitudes? Of particular importance are social learning theory (which is concerned, among other topics, with the acquisition of behaviour from models) and the theory of cognitive development. These theories indicate indirect as well as direct ways in which the media may influence children's attitudes.

Thirdly, there is some research which reports children's own assessment of the importance of television in informing them about the world, and one study which probes more deeply into the effect of television upon the attitudes of young people.

Political socialization research has been done primarily by American political scientists. Civic education has recently become a major focus of persons interested in comparative education and cross-national comparisons in both developed and developing nations.[1] The majority of research dealing directly with media which is reported here has been done with American groups though there is some work from Norway, Canada, and Australia.

Issues in Political Socialization Research

No attempt will be made to review all recent political socialization studies.[2] Rather, major kinds of research approaches will be described with the aim of increasing our understanding of the pre-adult as a political being and the points at which the media may have an influence. Many political socialization studies, particularly early ones, found it necessary to establish that political attitudes are in fact important among young people. Some had argued that it was pointless to question young people about their politics until they had reached voting age. This point of view was common primarily in the early 1960's, before students voiced their political demands so forcefully. In the United States, the student demonstrations and the recent lowering of the voting age to eighteen have underscored the importance of pre-adult studies. Not only has civic education in the secondary school come in for considerable scrutiny but recently, the years before entry into high school have been described as critical for certain kinds of political development.

Early political socialization studies also established that the definition of political attitudes should include more than choice of political party and candidate preference. Research conducted by political scientists is still likely to concentrate on the following dimensions (many of them derived from adult voting-behaviour studies): political efficacy (feeling that the citizen can influence his government), tolerance for dissent in democracy, sources of political advice, allegiance to the national government and its leaders. But what was formerly an almost exclusive concern with domestic political units and issues has recently been broadened, with more interest in how the child acquires a view of the world as an interacting social system. A major trend for the future is toward determining how political socialization in the international as well as in the domestic sphere is achieved.[3]

Finally, political scientists have been very much concerned with the locus and agents of political socialization. What is the impact of the family? Is it greater or less than the influence of the school? On what types of issues are students likely to follow the lead of their peers? Langton and Jennings found that for most secondary school students in their U.S. national sample the number of civics courses taken had no relation to the type of attitudes expressed, casting some doubt on the importance of the school in this area.[4] Others, like Ehman,[5]

[1] The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (I.E.A.) has recently completed gathering data on Civic Education from ten –, fourteen –, and seventeen-year-olds in ten nations. Results of this project, which has surveyed approximately 35,000 students, will be available in about one year. Until then see Oppenheim, B. and Torney, J.V. *Measuring Civic Attitudes in Children of Different Nations.* Stockholm, Sweden: IEA Monographs.

[2] Major early studies were Greenstein, F. *Children and Politics,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965; Hess, R.D. and Torney, J.V. *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children,* Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967; Langton, K.P. and Jennings, M.K. "Political Socialization and the High School Curriculum in the United States," *American Political Science Review,* 61, 751-58.

[3] See Torney, J.V. and Morris, D.N. *Global Dimensions of U.S. Education: The Elementary School.* New York: Center for War/Peace Studies, 1972.

[4] Langton and Jennings, op. cit.

[5] Ehman, L. "An Analysis of Selected Educational Variables with the Political Socialization of High School Students." *American Education Research Journal,* 1969, 6, 559-80.

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have pointed to the necessarily complex relationship of school inputs to political attitudes. It may be the type of class the teacher conducts rather than the number of courses in the prescribed curriculum which is important.

Processes of Attitude Formation and Change: Manifest and Latent Messages in the Schools and the Media

In addition to the descriptive work being done on school and family as the locus of political socialization, several models of the way in which civic attitude development takes place are important.

A major set of useful hypotheses about *how* socialization takes place is derived from the work of Bandura, a psychologist. According to social learning theory, behaving like an adult may take on intrinsic reinforcement value for the child. The child may acquire a motive "to be like adults" and therefore find imitation intrinsically gratifying whether or not he is directly rewarded for this modelling. By this process the child may imitate the political orientations which he hears adults express. The most common example of this kind of effect is the tendency for political party identification to be the same for parent and child. Recognizing imitation of this sort, which does not require feedback from the model to the modeller, sensitizes us to the potential role of the mass media (particularly television programmes), where many models of social and political behaviour are presented. Intensifying our concern with the media is the knowledge that a wide range of learned social relationships, not all of them with explicit political content, may contribute to the child's political attitudes. Much of the child's knowledge about political relationships is generalized from other experience. For example he learns a great deal about authority relationships as he relates to parents and teachers. The roles learned here are transferred to mould relationships to policemen and other governmental authority figures. Both the possibility of intrinsic reinforcement for imitating models who cannot directly give rewards and the important role of generalization from a wide range of social relationships to political attitudes underscore the potential impact of mass media operating through the social learning process.[1]

Much of the communication from the mass media to the young person may be unintentional or latent. One example of this comes not from the political realm but from recent discussions in the United States concerning the portrayal of feminine roles. Women who want their daughters to consider a career as an appropriate and fulfilling life style in addition to or instead of marriage are concerned that in children's books women are almost exclusively portrayed as staying at home.[2] Even in some books which portray animals rather than humans, often all of the active roles are given to male animals while the female animals sit and watch. Likewise, on some television programmes and many commercials in the United States the feminine characters are shown as exclusively involved with home-centered activities such as cooking, laundry, house cleaning, and child care. It may be that the absence of portrayals of women in more active roles communicates to the girl who is learning to read or watching television that certain interests and actions are appropriate only for men even though the writer or television producer may not have intended to leave this impression.

Latent communication is particularly important when we consider television. This omnipresent medium is powerful precisely because it involves dimensions and characteristics which are not fully understood.[3] Pictures, music, voice quality combine to communicate in very powerful ways and as much by implication as by direct statement. To give an example, showing a farmyard scene while discussing news about farm legislation would surely evoke a different reaction than pictures of angry farmers meeting to demand higher prices.

Unintended as well as intended messages are part of school as well as television programmes. In addition to the potential double effect of latent and manifest messages, there is often a great contrast in the communication which children receive from television and that which they get at school. Let us examine several topics where educational objectives and media presentation seem particularly incongruent:

1. Sense of History

Most educators would agree that giving children some sense of history, some sense of the continuity of past, present, and future events is important. When history is studied in schools the underlying causes of events are sought. Too often, however, the relationship of past events to the contemporary scene is not carefully explored, and the student is seldom given help in projecting these events into the future. History as taught in school too often exists in the past and alternative ways in which social change occurs are seldom explored. Television news broadcasts, in contrast, move abruptly from one contemporary news scene or story to another. There is a failure in most television presentations to develop any themes of causality or continuity. The news seldom has a past or future dimension. Although their faults are of different types, both school courses and television broadcasts fail to help the student to understand present events in terms of historical antecedents or to project current social trends into the future.

2. Sense of Realistic Political Efficacy

A second educational aim is to encourage children to develop a realistic sense of political efficacy. The belief that the citizen should be politically active and can have an influence on government policy is an objective of much school civic education. The child is taught a great deal about the formal governmental structure through which the citizen may exert influence. Voting in elections is particularly stressed for its efficacy. The child often obtains from school curriculum an unrealistic picture of the potential impact of the individual's

[1] For a recent study demonstrating that children are more likely to model the behaviour of adults seen on television than on the behaviour of peers, see Nicholas, K.B., McCarter, R.E. and Heckel, R.V. "The effects of race and sex on imitation of a T.V. model." *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1971, 85, 315-16.

[2] Steffire, B. "Run, Mama, Run: Women Workers in Elementary Readers," *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, 1969, 99-102.

[3] Recent attempts to measure eye movements while watching television may help to indicate what is attention catching. See Wolf, W. "Perception of Visual Displays." *Viewpoints*, 1971, 47, 112-40.

opinion. Elections and formal governmental structures are sometimes stressed on television, but political protests and demonstrations are also common. Seldom, either in school or through the media, does the student see organized pressure groups at work or citizens doing what is often tedious grass-roots work in the community. This failure of television to encourage realistic efficiency is expressed also by Connell:

> Television can show things to fear, things to be shocked by, things to amuse . . . but it does not show the children things to do, forms of engagement. Children under the influence of television . . . come early to know about and react emotionally to those events which are the most distant from them and least susceptible to influence.[1]

The problem of developing a realistic sense of political efficiency is made more difficult because the child receives one message from the school and another from news and current events broadcasting; neither message is adequate to develop the kinds of attitudes and behaviour which the political system needs for optimum survival.

3. The Existence of Conflict and Means of Non-Violent Resolution:

A third aim of most educators is to teach children that issues exist over which people disagree, but that means for resolving these conflicts, such as negotiation, are to be preferred to violence. Latent communication through the selection of topics both in school materials and in television programming contributes to students' misunderstanding of conflict. A survey was recently made of randomly sampled paragraphs from social studies texts written for nine – and ten-year-olds in schools in the United States. In less than twenty percent of these paragraphs was there any mention of four major social problems: race and ethnic relations, distribution of income, political negotiations and processes, ecological practices. More striking still, when those paragraphs which did mention social issues were examined, very few even suggested that conflict and stress were often associated with these issues:

> Less than one percent of the seventeen thousand paragraphs gave the reader the impression that race and ethnic relations . . . involve conflict and stress.
>
> Less than one percent discussed distribution of income in any way that suggested economic inequality or exploitation.[2]

The fact that explicit statements about conflicts or problems were extremely rare permitted that latent message to come through that these conflicts do not exist. Perhaps they were once problems, but racial conflict and economical inequality have been solved, if one is to believe the textbooks.

The selectivity which has operated, at least in the United States, in deciding what is sufficiently newsworthy to be shown on television communicates a message to children which is almost diametrically opposed to that communicated from school texts. The kinds of international or foreign events that an American child is most likely to see on television news programmes are those concerning war or other episodes of violence (e.g. in Indochina or Northern Ireland).[3] The representation of a completely benign society communicated to students in textbooks is contradicted constantly by the news which appears on television and in other media of communication.

Charny has suggested still another kind of latent communication arising from the way in which violence is reported on television:

> The newscasters tell us in their baritone-rich voices how many of us have killed how many other of us and, betraying a covert kind of excitement, the announcers give us the subliminal message "well folks, it's happened again, it's always going to happen, and there isn't a damn thing we can do about it."[4]

And this sense of endless violence does have an influence which some young people can articulate. A fourteen year old American girl who was recently asked if she liked to listen to the news responded, "Oh yes, you hear about what's happening in the world, but it gets boring after a while because you hear so much about it, like killings and wars and murders. It's the same routine all the time. It's not commercial, killing I mean, but it's so routine. Only if I know the person does it mean anything to me."

4. An International World View:

In the case of a fourth objective, to give children a picture of the international nature of the world and the interdependence of people in it, the school and the television both seem to have laudable aims which are seldom effectively communicated. In addition to the news programmes, already discussed for their emphasis on international violence, films about travel are probably the most frequent television exposure which young people have to other countries. Himmelweit, Oppenheim and Vince[5] discussed the "boomerang effect" which they observed with some programmes which were meant to help English people when they were touring in

[1] Connell, R.W. *The Child's Construction of Politics*, Melbourne: University of Melbourne Press, 1971, p. 18.

[2] Hess, R.D. "The System Maintenance Function of Social Development in the Schools." *Proceedings of the 1971 Invitational Conference on Testing*, Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1972, p. 20.

[3] Almany, A. "International and Foreign Affairs on Network Television News," *Journal of Broadcasting*, 1970, 14, 499-509.

[4] Charny, I. "We need a Human Language for Reporting the Tragedies of Current Violent Events." Unpublished paper, 1971.

[5] Himmelweit, H. Oppenheim, A.N. and Vince, P. *Television and the Child*. London: Oxford, 1958.

France by presenting solutions for some travel problems. Instead of encouraging people to travel reassured that they could handle these difficulties, it was found that fewer people travelled to France because they became concerned about problems which they had never realized existed before.

In travel programmes shown in the United States, a common way of mobilizing viewer interest is by showing exotic and unusual aspects of other cultures. This may result in comment such as those recently obtained from interviews with young children who when asked how people in other countries were different from themselves mentioned such exotica as "people in Africa eat ants," "In Japan they bind the children's feet." An educational travelogue recently shown in Chicago also provided several examples of unintentional condescension. The film began with several scenes of the narrator in a Norwegian bed with his feet sticking out from under what was described as a typical Scandinavian comforter, "always too long or too short, too hot or too cold." Presumably this was designed to amuse the viewer; in fact the implication was that Scandinavians do not know how to make comfortable bedding. The narrator went on to compliment the Norwegians for "being on our side in the war" and to describe Norwegian food with the added comment "of course, I like shrimp better the way we fix it in the good old U.S.A." The assumption here about another country do not contribute to a view of the world in which human diversity in custom and opinion is valued.

In a recent survey of some curriculum guides in social studies which are intended manifestly to give an international dimension to American children's education, some latent communication of an anti-international bias was found. In one medium-sized city in the United States an attempt to introduce cross-national comparison at an intermediate grade level may actually have fostered a quite different attitude. The political and geographical units suggested for comparison in this unit were American City X and the country of Japan. That children were encouraged in this case to assume that two political units which are in fact unequal in size, population, and political status must in some respect be equal, may be considered a first piece of latent communication. Secondly, comparisons were suggested as follows:

1. American City X is first in its region with many industries producing needed products for its citizens. Japan has made greater progress in industry than any Asian country due to Western influence.
2. Indians concluded a treaty with the United States regarding the site of City X. Japan had no real civilization until the Chinese Buddhists visited there.

The stress here is upon the importance of City X and the culture close to the child. This latent message seems stronger than the manifest aim of trying to internationalize the study material.[1]

To summarize, great gaps exist between history of the past as it is taught in school and fragmentary views of the present as they appear on television; between the formality of the election process as it is taught in civic education and political protests presented on the media; between conflict-free social studies texts and the world reflected in current affairs broadcasting where violence is an everyday matter and conflicting attitudes are conveyed in powerful terms. The ability of a student to resolve these conflicting points of view depends in large part upon his level of cognitive development. It is this important part of psychological process which will be considered next.

Investigators of political socialization in the recent past have looked closely at the way in which the child places the particular imprint of his cognitive level and style upon the information that comes to him. Whatever it is that the teacher or the media or the textbook seem from an objective point of view to be telling him, the child may understand it in quite a different way. Regular and sequential alterations over time in the way the child processes information are cognitive developmental changes. Although there are many ways of looking at these changes, the work of Jean Piaget presents a scheme with considerable utility for researchers trying to understand this process.

Some early surveys of children's political attitudes were able to demonstrate a relatively substantial relationship between I.Q. score and attitudes. This, however, was only suggestive since scores on I.Q. tests index something slightly different from cognitive development as Piaget and others have characterized it.

Alvik, in a study of Norwegian children demonstrated that those who were able to reason reciprocally (measured by a Piagetian-type test using concrete materials) were also more likely to have an active conception of peace (rather than seeing it only as the absence of war).[2] He demonstrated an actual linkage between the ability to use a relatively high level of cognitive process in dealing with material objects and this social concept. Much more research needs to be done on this kind of linkage.

Connell, in a study of Australian children (ages five through sixteen) used a type of interview which allowed probing of cognitive processes underlying attitudes. The author drew conclusions based on Piaget's framework:

> The character of this political consciousness (of young children) reflects . . . the stage of intuitive thought. We may note arguments that leap suddenly from topic to topic, the seizing of odd and apparently irrelevant details, and the apparently random juxtaposition of details . . . More generally the punctate character of the understanding of politics reflects the lack of synthesizing power in intuitive thought. We may argue that these children lack a conception of political structure not because they lack sources of information about it, but because they lack the cognitive equipment to represent it.[3]

[1] Torney and Morris, op. cit.

[2] Alvik, T. "The Development of Views on Conflict, War, and Peace Among School Children: A Norwegian Case Study," *Journal of Peace Research*, 2, 1968 171-95.

[3] Connell, op. cit., p. 18.

Children will interpret material from the media, as well as from other sources, in a way appropriate to their cognitive developmental level. When material is to be designed particularly for use with children, it should be tailored so that the information can either be assimilated to existing cognitive schemes or require only a slight accommodation of these structures. If there is too great a discrepancy between the child's current level of cognitive functioning and the material presented, it will be impossible for him to modify his cognitive structures sufficiently to understand it. Individualizing the message to correspond to the child's readiness is possible in some school settings but this is more difficult with mass media, where programmes are designed to appeal to a broad segment of the population and not particularly to be understood by one who looks at the world through the cognitive prism of an eight-year-old. This is particularly true for current events programmes, which are usually designed for adult audiences (who it is assumed operate at an adult cognitive level).

It is also important to realize that contradiction between what the child sees in the media and what his classroom experience constitutes may not be a bad thing but may in fact be helpful. Piaget's theory states that children may move forward in their cognitive development when there is contradiction between the material gained from one source of perception and that gained from another source. The existence of mismatch brings about the active cognitive process of accommodation. The child will often accommodate his internal cognitive structure to cope more effectively with the world without aid from teachers or parents. However, schools could help by dealing explicitly with contradictions between what the child sees in a textbook and what he sees in the newspaper, what the child hears in the classroom and what he sees on television.

Research on the Influence of Television on Children

Children in the period of pre-adolescence and early adolescence are at a critical phase for understanding the political world. This is true especially because of the malleability of their political world view. After the age of fourteen or fifteen their perspective is likely to be more rigid and less amenable to change.[1] This same age period is also important from the point of view of children's use of television. Flapan investigated the interpretations girls placed upon a simple story presented in a movie done as it might be on television.[2] By the age of nine these children were able to report communication fairly accurately and to project feelings and thoughts onto adults whose actions they had observed. A similar study was conducted in the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Great Britain, Czechoslovakia, and the United States.[3] Children were shown two films which had been highly judged in the Prix Jeunesse Competition. Many elements of children's reports on these films were attributed to their cognitive developmental level. The British researchers in particular contrasted the behaviour of eight – to nine-year-old children with that of ten – to twelve-year-olds. The younger children appeared to concentrate on the story line at the cost of retaining details. The older group not only remembered the details but used them as clues to the story. DeFleur and DeFleur in another U.S. study reported that children who frequently watched television were better informed about occupations portrayed on the programmes than were less frequent watchers.[4] There were no differences in information for occupations not frequently shown. This tends to confirm the importance of latent messages and of incidental learning from television.

Two major and general studies of children's television watching were done in England in 1955-56[5] and in the United States in 1958-60.[6] Both the group in England, headed by Himmelweit, and the group in the United States, headed by Schramm, comment on the importance of this age period, the critical nature of incidental learning about the character of adult life from television, and the relationship between emotional or cognitive readiness and the child's reaction to programmes. Children and early adolescents are likely to be watching television a great deal and interpreting it with some filters they use in dealing cognitively and emotionally with the world as they know it. They are acquiring attitudes in both a manifest and latent way.

Most studies report that public affairs programming does not rate high in children's interest compared with situation comedy, crime, and sports (though its ranking improves at the high school level.)[7] Looking at the problem in a different way, however, studies of political attitude development which ask children to report the sources of most importance in forming their attitudes find that the media rank high.

Alvik, in the Norwegian study discussed earlier, found that television was the source cited most often by children, particularly in their information about war.[8] When war was seen in a reciprocal framework (from the point of view of both sides) this was usually on a level and in a context which suggested that parents or some other adult had helped the child to decipher the information presented by the media. Haavelsrud,[9] studying American and Canadian children, found that television and mass media were cited more frequently than parents, school or religion as sources of understanding about war and peace. Coldevin[10] also found that American and Canadian children cited television newscasts more consistently than any other source

[1] Evidence for this critical period is reviewed in Torney and Morris, op. cit.

[2] Flapan, D. *Children's Understanding of Social Interaction.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1968.

[3] *Findings on the Television Perception and Cognition of Children and Young People.* Munich: Internationales Zentralinstitut für das Jugend – und Bildungsfernsehen, 1969.

[4] DeFleur, M.L. and DeFleur, L. "The Relative Contribution of Television as a Learning Source for Children's Occupational knowledge," *American Sociological Review,* 1968, 77-89.

[5] Himmelweit, H., Oppenheim, A.N. and Vince, P., op. cit.

[6] Schramm, W., Lyle, J. and Parker, E.B. *Television in the Lives of Our Children.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961.

[7] Schramm, op. cit.

[8] Alvik, op. cit.

[9] Haavelsrud, M. Paper presented at the American Psychological Association, September 1971.

[10] Coldevin, G. *The Effects of Mass Media Upon the Development of Transnational Orientations.* Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1971.

for their transnational orientations. Lambert and Klineberg[1] in their 1959 study of the attitudes of children toward foreign people found that mass media (particularly television and the movies) were the most frequently reported sources of information about foreign people for children in developed nations (U.S.A., Canada, Germany and Japan). In the less developed nations in their sample (Bantu, Brazil, Israel, Lebanon, and Turkey) parents and friends were of greater importance. France was an exception, being developed in the economic sense but more like the less developed nations in sources of information used.

Hirsch[2] gave a questionnaire to all students in the fifth through twelfth grades in Knox County, Kentucky—a poverty-level area in U.S. Appalachia. The students were asked the following four questions: "Where do you get most of your information about what's going on in a) your home town, b) your home state, c) the United States, d) the world?" The group ranked television first on all questions. Second was radio; third were newspapers; fourth was school. At lower ranks were parents and friends. This ranking pattern held for all the age levels. The media were ranked especially high as sources for national and international news. Hirsch suggests that the impact of television is, to use his term, more latent than manifest. He defines manifest communication as material which presents specific political views. He refers to the presentation of world events, the portrayal of popular culture and other elements which involve incidental or observational learning, as latent communication. His evidence for this distinction is primarily speculative, however.

Although American children do attribute the acquisition of much of their information to television, they do not see it serving as a source of advice about which candidate to support in an election. In response to the question. "Where would be the best place to look for help in making up your mind about whom to vote for?" only about five percent of a group of 12,000 children surveyed in 1962 chose radio and television. The media were perceived as sources of information but not of advice in important political choices.

A recent review of some political socialization research concluded:

> The communication media are important in carrying news about everyday political events. In addition, the media convey, both directly and indirectly, the major consensus values of the society. Media act to reinforce the lessons passed on probably more effectively by the family, schools, peers, and other agents of political learning.[3]

Although this is in part an accurate assessment, at the time it was written the authors did not have access to much of the research reported above. Clearly, however, there is an interaction between media content and individuals from which the child seeks explanation, clarification, and various other kinds of feedback about opinions.

The strongest piece of evidence regarding media impact on children's attitudes is offered by Connell,[4] who interviewed ninety-two Australian children. His study is sounder than many because he did not ask children to summarize and rank their general experience with sources of information (as did most of the studies cited above). Rather, for each political opinion or set of opinions the child expressed in response to an interview question, he asked why the child believed that or where that opinion came from. His summary table, derived from many responses, showed that television was the most frequently cited source of information on the Prime Minister of Australia, the President of the United States, the Leader of the Opposition, and Vietnam. It was cited less often than school and family sources in providing information about the Queen. Many of the ideas about political figures commonly expressed by his group could be traced to television:

> The idea of political figures "telling people what to do" derives in part from the sight of them speaking on television . . . A political figure making a public statement is newsworthy while the same figure engaged in administrative tasks is not. The children's awareness of relationship among the major political figures is also stimulated by news reporting of their travels and meetings.[5]

With regard to the war in Vietnam, one product of news exposure to news media seemed to be the idea that if the Communists are not stopped in Vietnam, they will invade Australia. The linkage on television of this war with past wars leads to the formation of this "threat scheme," he concluded. According the Connell, television caused children to learn about the President of the United States before the Prime Minister of Australia. They also knew more about Vietnam than about domestic Australian issues. Television seemed to reverse the long-held assumption that political concern begins with the local community and only later broadens to include the national and international scene.

As to the relationship of media to other socialization agents, Connell found a change in a previously accepted two-step flow of communication. It was once assumed that media communications influence leaders of opinion who in turn influence others. The current research suggests that children get information from the media and then seek interpretation of this information from an adult. This parallels Alvik's description of adults as "decipherers of information" for young people. The conclusion to be drawn from this study is that, as adults, we need to become more effective at helping young people to understand what they see and hear in the media.

Finally, there is one recent study which attempted to assess in a before-after design the impact of viewing television documentaries upon measured attitudes.[6] It was done with American college students (aged about

[1] Lambert, W.E. and Klineberg, O. *Children's Views of Foreign People.* New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1967.

[2] Hirsch, H. *Poverty and Politicization.* New York: Free Press, 1971.

[3] Dawson, R. and Prewitt, K. *Political Socialization.* Boston: Little Brown, 1969.

[4] Connell, op. cit.

[5] Connell, op. cit., p. 27.

[6] Fitzsimmon, S.J. and Osburn, H.G. "The Impact of Social Issue and Public Affairs Documentaries." *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 1968, 32, 379-94.

twenty). The documentaries which they viewed were on topics such as automation, migrant workers, and birth control. Viewing these films had an immediate effect on attitudes, but only the film on migrant workers showed retention of an effect after a four-week time period. The authors suggested that the measured impact of the documentaries may have been lessened because many of the attitude measures (e.g., willingness to join groups to promote public education on the issue) were very high before the students viewed the documentary. This could have produced a ceiling on the possible effect of the film. The most important aspect of the documentaries seemed to be their emotional impact rather than the information transmitted. The authors concluded that the media were particularly important where events were removed from the direct experience of people—situations which were not likely to be encountered in everyday life. Part of their lack of long-range results may be due to the over familiarity of college students with the issues presented. The same would probably not be true for younger people whose experience with these matters would be correspondingly less.

Conclusions

Several concrete suggestions emerge from this review. The media and the school are presenting current events in very different ways, and children themselves report that they attribute great importance to what they see on television. Part of what is needed is a better balance of the approach of media and school. Through latent and manifest communication the school often tends to give the impression that by affirming our democratic ideals, we have achieved them, and frequently fails to take sufficient notice of the real conflicts that exist. Current events programming in television, on the other hand, seems preoccupied with moving from one scene of conflict and violence to another, often without rational continuity, and without attempting to establish any relationship between cause and effect. Both sets of influences – schools and media – are mediated for the child by his tendency to extract latent messages and by his cognitive developmental level, which determines his readiness to understand material and the way in which he will resolve contradictions. Young people seek help in deciphering information and in understanding the discrepancies between school information and media information. Teachers should encourage children to discuss what they see on television, even setting aside regular class time for this discussion. This is even more important for the medium of television than for the printed media because several senses are involved, meaning that there is a higher likelihood of misinterpretation on the part of young viewers. Serious educational efforts are necessary to make children literate with regard to visual media. The schools need to become more active participants in this process – helping students to understand and evaluate all kinds of information from all kinds of sources. Today's students will hardly be satisfied with either the simple reassurance that all is well or, the reverse, that violent conflict must always play a major part in the affairs of men. The school can help them arrive at a better solution.

Current Affairs Coverage on Television: The French Experience

1) Senator Louis Gros; President of the Cultural Affairs Committee of the Senate.

The first and the greatest difficulty for contemporary society is to control the discoveries which are being made at an increasingly rapid rate in every field: to control them, to adapt itself to them and to humanise them.

Within a few decades radio and then television have caused an upheaval in our society comparable to that produced by the invention of printing and, curiously, at the distance of a few centuries each has transformed society in diametrically opposed ways. Guttenberg in his own time put an end to the preponderance of oral communication and information, and today these same methods of printed communication and information see themselves superseded, competed with or accompanied by the illustrated spoken word in the form of the "audio-visual" media.

But how much wider the consequences are; printed information and communication even with a big circulation certainly had a much wider range and spread more rapidly than simple oral communication, but printed matter nevertheless required and still requires, the ability to write and read and the time to read. The most recent research reveals that in our world today there are still 800 million illiterates.

Television and radio, however, which require of the audience only passivity and the knowledge of a language, often sketchy, and even discontinuous attention, reach not only thousands or hundreds of thousands, but tens of millions of people and can superimpose themselves on a manual professional activity: the dimension has this time changed the very nature of the problem.

Quite soon, we are told, we shall have transmissions by satellite which all private sets will be able to receive, extending the simultaneous transmission of the most detailed information to thousands of millions. All this is not a figment of the imagination but a close reality. Let us remember that the beep-beep of the first Sputnik dates from 1957.

In this situation, in view of what we have now and what we shall have in the near future, it is necessary that some people should take time to reflect on the seriousness, the extent and the nature of the shock, some would say trauma, which our society is suffering in all its elements, at all ages and at all levels of culture as a result of the invasion of every moment of our life by the audio-visual media. How could we not be preoccupied by the new and unique methods of mass communication of radio and television? Quantitatively new because at the same moment millions of people are simultaneously receiving the same message of ideas, facts or opinions. And we know it is not true to say that the individual can protect himself, by turning off the T.V. or not looking at it for we are not arguing about the exceptions but about the whole. Imperious, instantaneous, ineluctable on one or ten stations, radio and television are part of everyone's life, they are an element of life in our society.

Programmes reach their audience simultaneously, but a broadcast is also synchronised with the event, not only at the national level but throughout the world. The life of the whole world in all its aspects is a permanant spectacle and everyone wants to receive and choose his own spectacle in this way. Finally, this audio-visual transmission, from which the written word is practically excluded, makes it difficult if not impossible for the individual to reflect. One image chases another, a commentary follows while the listener is unable to meditate, to think critically or to exercise his judgment.

How, in the midst of this aggression by television, this uninterrupted bombardment of information, can we preserve the character of the individual and especially the personality of the young, whose total commitment may be provoked by the discovery of an item of current affairs at the moment and at the age when their personality is being formed. It is when one thinks of a young pupil or student faced with a current affairs broadcast that each of us has dreamed of a magic carpet to take us away to an ideal world where information would be perfect. An information which would interpose no original or personal idea between the event and the reception of the message – the event thus transmitted in its purity would have undergone no transformation. So it is that in France, but presumably elsewhere too, all our speeches on this subject announce, recommend or promise information which is objective, loyal, complete and honest.

We say all this because we believe it and want it. But is this disembodied, dehumanised, almost anonymous information possible, or even desirable? Even this ideal information is seen by audiences differing widely, not only in age, but in intellectual level, degree of intelligence and capacity for analysis. The same information on some event will be seen as a truth, an unquestionable postulate by someone incapable of questioning it for lack of culture or intelligence, as an element of judgment by the more educated who can make comparisons, and as a discovery to be understood and enlarged upon by the young. Thus because of the diversity in the personalities of those who receive it, ideal information for some will not be ideal for others. We all know that.

But the supplier of information who is a man and not a photo-copying machine cannot make this link between the event and the public without his personality intervening. Information can take four different forms:

1. Raw information: the statement of a fact
2. Situated information: information placed in a statistical, historical context
3. Commented information: the statement of a fact with a value judgment or an opinion
4. Elucidated information: this goes beyond commentary and is the complete answer to the demands of knowledge of a subject and the explanation of the event.

Every day we see these four forms used in the news and it cannot be otherwise according to objective criteria – if the event is held to be important – but also according to the individual criteria of the provided information, the reporter must first of all choose from the mass of information he receives from all his sources (agencies, newspapers, reports, radio, photographs, etc.) and then give to each of the events chosen a coefficient of importance. He will write or speak the commentary or analysis, starting from his own reactions and his own judgment. He will do all this in a very limited period of time. Those who have known, as I once knew, the hour of editorial adaptation, the jangled nerves which accompany the "putting to bed" of a newspaper and imagine that television is a perpetual "putting to bed" – for the telex messages and telegrams arrive unceasingly right up to the end of the broadcast – will have some idea of a radio news programme which sometimes has an edition every hour, or a television news programme, which has to be shown, illustrated and re-made three or four times a day.

Without wishing to be unfair to the people concerned, television journalists are pre-occupied with the problem of saying as much as possible in the minimum amount of time and of illustrating what is said with a necessarily limited number of images, which are selected and therefore exaggerated and made up of striking close-ups or sensational scenes.

This extreme simplification imposed by the limited time and number of images distorts the excessively brief information, which remains unexplained to those ignorant of the subject. Those who know a little, unless they are drowsy, will protect themselves; those who know nothing cannot do so.

After this brief resumé of the human conditions of producing programmes on current affairs and social and political questions, having made a frank attempt to de-mythologise the concept of ideal information which for many people would consist of hearing and seeing what *they* wanted, believed or thought and their own personal view of the world, I would like to give my answer, limiting myself to the question of the French experience.

Valuable research has been done since the first statute of O.R.T.F. in 1959 (in 1964 and 1972) on the quality of information and the conditions in which it is produced. As everywhere the journalists, reporters and technicians have pursued their investigations honestly, perfectly conscious of the seriousness of the subject.

In France, as in some other countries, the research is carried on within a monopoly system. The argument between those who advocate private involvement and those in favour of the present monopoly is certainly not over, but the reality is there: the 1972 law confirms it once again. As far as radio and television are concerned, the state makes a profit from the monopoly. Of course the monopoly in radio is breached by the peripheral stations and the ease with which one can listen to the whole world; but there is a monopoly of broadcasting from national territory and the majority of listeners restrict themselves to the national radio, even where language presents no problems. In television, with the exception of a fairly narrow band at the frontiers, the monopoly of the State is total with two channels at present and a third in the very near future.

The State monopoly, delegated to a service which is independent but under the wing of Government, is a complicated structure, which from time to time certainly has its limitations. No-one can deny, or would wish to deny, the effectiveness and political power represented by television in society. Montesquieu knew only three powers: the legislative, the judiciary and the executive. The press was long ago said to be the fourth; today the facts show radio and television to be the fourth power.

In no State, even in those which allow private, commercial channels, is there a total freedom to create a new channel and to broadcast. Governments give the licences and can withdraw them. But the system of private channels results in control by the channels among themselves. Based on the commercial system of advertising revenue, each channel must aim for the greatest possible audience in order to justify a larger number of announcers, and this pursuit of the greatest possible audience is a natural deterrent to information which is too committed and alienates the average listener. One might ask oneself, in the final analysis, whether this hidden control of the content of the broadcast on the part of the announcer is preferable to a form of control sympathetic to the Government. In France Government and Parliament have maintained the principle of the monopoly. A meeting was arranged to consider a revision at the time when broadcasting is invaded by satellites. What came of it? The relations between Service (O.R.T.F.) and Government have been, and remain, those of a tutor with a minor under his care. There are times when things go well, then times when the minor kicks over the traces, wants to live his own life and is called to order: whether the incidents are serious or not, this is inevitable. But once again, one must remember that the institution is not twenty years old, that it is not possible for a creation starting from scratch to develop its own traditions and code of ethics without some conflicts. The minor grows up, he becomes emancipated, and as his strength grows he discovers the limits within which he can exercise it.

As far as information is concerned, especially seen from abroad, French television seems to be the object of criticism from all sides. But this general dissatisfaction which is almost unanimous is a homage to the service; if it has not completely satisfied anyone, this is precisely because it remains somewhat detached and is not committed.

In conclusion, since it is impossible to suppress television or to ban it, and since on the contrary, we have to accept it and perhaps even to hope for its further development; since it is impossible, even with the best of computers in place of the journalist, to end up with information which is not the result of selection and commentary; since it is also obvious that there are no broadcasts exclusively for the young, for adults, for the old, for lively minds, for intelligent kids, or for the critics, what are the elements which make action possible?

They are the listeners and the informers. As a previous speaker pointed out, the teacher must teach a new subject at the same time as language, history or mathematics, i.e. television, the audio-visual language. It is up to the teacher, the social and family background to teach the young how to receive the televised message, how to

decode it, how to assimilate it, how to see it as part of the whole and to discover that this daily panorama of the world only brings out certain points which are in the news, and that in the background there is the constant factor of the millions of men who are living out their lives. The passivity of the young in front of the television screen must be studied and avoided. There is also a second element; the producer and the informer must take account of the fact that he is responsible for the development and the blossoming of hundreds of thousands of young people; that the understandable satisfaction of being the star who every day tells millions of people about the world is filled with danger and responsibilities. The speakers, journalists and presenters would do well to bear in mind the Arab proverb "Remember that you are master of the words you have not pronounced, but that you are the slave of those you have just uttered."

2) Summary of Remarks made by Christian Bernadac, Editor, Troisième Chaîne, O.R.T.F.

Monsieur Christian Bernadac gave a short explanation of the evolution of the Organisation and then replied with Senator Gros to many comments and enquiries concerning the independence of the service as a state monopoly, its selection of news and commentaries.

He traced three periods in the development of the T.V. since its modest beginning. First, until about 1963, it was operated by professionals of the cinema, the object being mainly to produce a spectacle, though some comments on the day's news and interviews were introduced. The start of television *sui generis* he traced to 1963 when the treatment of news ceased simply to be an adapted newspaper. The greater part of the time was still given to pictures from all over the world; the whole of the day's information could be contained in two columns of *Le Monde*. But the pictures were now commented upon by T.V. specialists. Unless a journalist had technical T.V. qualifications, it was found that he was no good for the purpose. It was from 1968 that technique predominated and a more complex service was developed with three different channels. News and information of world affairs was common to between 40% and 50% viewers, but for the first time it was possible to compare two different daily news broadcasts and commentaries. Then the third channel was introduced to complement the others with the result that there were now three *journaux télévisés* between 10 a.m. and 11 p.m. With what result? People were saturated with information and it was estimated that 30% of the viewers were lost. A monthly summary of events and documentary films were of growing interest.

Ought the newscaster or commentator to express a point of view? M. Bernadac thought this inevitable for T.V. all the world over. Ought he to be free in his judgment? Senator Gros considered that broadcasting, because of its power must in France remain a state monopoly. The Director General of the television service would be able to do what he wanted because the Government trusted him, though it was not of course possible to suppress personality and therefore a certain element of the subjective. Either he must be under the patronage of the state or, in commercial television, of those who financed it. As for the B.B.C. (which is neither a state monopoly nor a commercial service) he said that it was *sui generis* and would not work in Latin countries. Mr. Cathcart, refuting the criticism of commercial television so far as the British Independent Television was concerned, declared that it never suppressed or altered news, even in Northern Ireland, nor was it responsible to commercial pressure. M. Bernadac emphasized that Opposition policies and statements were always reported impartially on the O.R.T.F. and he saw little difference between the liberty of broadcasters on independent or state news services.

Why then, he was asked, were journalists sacked from the O.R.T.F. in 1968 and why did the staff go on strike? He replied that it was not basically a matter of political controversy but a professional quarrel about contracts. He was himself a radio journalist with experience on Radio Luxembourg and Europe No. 1 as well as on the O.R.T.F. and had experienced no difference in his freedom to present the news. Was Government pressure sometimes exerted, he was asked? Yes, he said, but as a journalist he was protected by his board of governors (Conseil d'Administration). Mr. Mansell however observed that there was more freedom of the Press than of Television in most countries.

All this, though important as defining the conditions governing the French experience of television in contrast, say, to the English or American, had little reference to its influence upon school children. But M. Bernadac gave an interesting reply to the criticism that too much violence was televised for them, *trop de révolver*. The problem of selection of news items, he said, arose from the sources of information available in a hurry. His service, for instance, received about 100 films a day from various news agencies, plus shots and stories from their own photographic teams; and twenty or thirty of these would be about the Vietnam war. Does a true picture of the world come out of this material? No, partly because the T.V. Editor has not got the film to show peaceful happenings, even more because the most striking events are necessarily picked out. He thought the choice of programme directors to be of little importance. The same events were treated by all channels: it was topicality (actualité) which commanded the decision. Whatever determined the presentation of news, the "fugitive journal" as M. François called it, it was, from the educator's point of view, the commentaries which were a real scourge. Prof. Molinini thought the most important thing was to give children the capacity to judge what they saw on T.V. Asked by another member whether there could not be a special T.V. information programme for the young, M. Bernadac said that it was most difficult to adapt T.V. news for children. The O.R.T.F. had three times devised and tried special programmes of this kind, but they had been a failure.

The Nature of Current Affairs Coverage on Television: The British Experience

1) Phillip Whitehead, M.P.:

I am speaking in three capacities, as a television producer, a politician and a parent. I am very aware of the extent to which television acts as one upon many influences on the growing child. Many parents unfortunately tend to see television as a baby-sitter for the very young, a kind of moving wall-paper for the slightly older, and drugs, marginally less harmful than marijuana, for the teenager. It is of course more than that, and it is the whole mosaic pattern of life reflected back through broadcasting, and particularly through television, and its effects upon children to which I naturally want to refer. In passing there is perhaps one area that we have not discussed as much as we should, a common area between those of us who have been involved in television production and those of us who are involved in education: the role of the parent. When we talk about selectivity, the selectivity of the producer – the way in which he chooses the images which are presented and the way in which they are ordered – we tend to talk very much without regarding that other choice, that other selectivity which belongs to the viewer; the choice between channels, the choice between programmes; the way in which the growing child and the young person and the mature citizen alike is able to exercise for himself a degree of choice about particular influences open to him. Because we are so concerned in these young days of television with the mystique of professionalism, with the tightly drawn élite which has dominated broadcasting up to now, with its potential power and with the fear of that power which is expressed by educationalists and politicians alike, we tend to forget the extent to which the dissemination of this power, amongst many sections of the community, will in turn mean far greater powers of choice, far greater exercise of the critical faculty among parents and among young people.

Now why is there so much concern expressed today about the role of television in society, the coverage of current affairs, of political events, of world crises? It is a fact that a generation is growing up who are able to use the medium themselves: in our colleges and polytechnics and universities in Britain, there is a generation of students who know how to use video-tapes, who are aware of the sophistications of film editing, who know precisely what is involved in that selection of images which goes into the making of a visual story for the television or for the cinema. And these people are moving, and will increasingly move by cable and satellite into local broadcasting and local television of a more participatory kind themselves.

Nevertheless, the central agency of television is subjected to an immense battery of criticism, of soul-searching at the moment, for its pivotal role in the way our society is ordered. Now why is it? I believe it is probably because the supposed consensus within many western societies, and certainly in Britain, is a fragmented and a fractured one at the moment. There is no longer that certainty, that general agreement, that secure frontier of the debate about the nature of society, about the way in which in the future societies should be ordered. Julian Critchley and I appear before you today as representatives not of the two extreme poles of British political society, but of an area somewhere in the centre covering perhaps no more than half or one third of the whole spread. I happen to believe in the efficacy of collective attitudes, in the need for a socialist society. He believes in the liberation of the individual spirit, and the profit motive and so on and in freedom, free enterprise, etc. Those are two view points among many. They are not the opposite poles within which the debate about society can be wholly conducted by television any more than in the press or in communications generally. And this is a part of the problem; because I would imagine that 20 years ago in Great Britain it was possible to say that there was agreed consensus about 90 per cent of the material which was being transmitted by broadcasting and increasingly television, as television came into its own.

One of our leading academics, Mr. Stuart Hall, put it this way: he says many people, many intelligent people, will not admit that broadcasting in Britain is in the middle of a monumental crisis. Not only do the broadcasting organisations generate, from one day to another, their own internal upheavals, but virtually every national emergency is almost immediately converted into an emergency within and about broadcasting. In complex, socially differentiated societies like ours the media hold the pass between public events and the audience. People are therefore legitimately concerned at broadcasting's power to shape the secondary environment, to provide interpretations of the situations in which conflicts develop, influencing the ethos in which opinion crystallizes. They are concerned about broadcasting's power to sustain a limited range of prevailing definitions about problematical events. And since the audience which the broadcasters address is also the electorate, people in politics, governments, institutional spokesmen, have a vested interest in using the media to corner the market in communications. There is also the anxiety fanned by populist campaigns and moral entrepreneurs that broadcasting is an active agent in undermining the moral and social conventions of society. Equally there is the problem of the structure of public access to the media. The media favour the powerful, the expert, the élite witnesses against the out-groups in society, the socially dispossessed, the verbally inarticulate, the deviant, the ethnic minority, the working class and so on.

That probably sums up the nature of the anxiety which many people from all sections of the political and also the educational spectrum feel about broadcasting today. They fear on the one hand that it may have a

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disruptive role. They fear that there might be a tightly drawn conspiracy of television producers, in the first instance nationally within Great Britain, but in the wider sense perhaps in the world community, who are deliberately attempting to influence and to impose a view of the world upon a passive society which is receiving the images. And on the other hand there are those, predominantly on the Left, who fear television's major role as a stabilizing influence; as an influence for fortifying the prejudices which people happen to have and happen to bring with them to television, so that they abstract from television, or the television programme that which fits their own prejudices and their own rationalisations of the world in which they live. Both of these anxieties relate, I think, to the nature of the fractured consensus in which we have to operate, in which the broadcasters have to operate and in which they themselves attempt to interpret the world, knowing that there is no area of certainty and general agreement which they can reflect back and win general approval for it.

Now I would suggest that the role of the broadcaster is no more than simply to represent as fairly and as accurately and as scrupulously as he possibly can all the conflicting opinions and anxieties and beliefs within society: the whole complex mosaic as he sees it, accurately and fairly, and all levels of social experience with it. Now that picture of society is a very wide one. We have spent, in my view, too much time in the last two days discussing the composition of the news. It is of course true that if you look at the news on television and compare it with the news on radio you will see a different priority given to the order of stories because the order of stories will be dominated by the visual element, by the need to choose dramatic people; what in England we would call the 'hooker', you must have a story that glues people to the set. For the picture of society that is coming over is not simply confined to the news broadcasts, or to the current affairs programmes. It is a picture of society being reflected back through the light entertainment programmes, through the drama, through all that element in broadcasting, and it is a very large one, which comes loosely under the heading of entertainment rather than under the heading of education or information, but which is information nevertheless, which falls into that category to which Professor Torney referred as 'latent impressions'. Impressions about certain categories and groups in society being put over by programmes which are intended to amuse, programmes which are light weight, programmes which will never be the subject of serious agonized inquiry by politicians and people, but which nevertheless help to make up the view which you may have about the role of women in society, about the role of working class people, about the role of strikers, about the role of particular countries in the world, which, because of the prevalent view of the elite in the broadcasting country never get a fair look in at all. And this is not a matter purely of Left or Right, it could equally well be said by somebody in Britain that elements on the extreme Right in society, foreign countries with which the extreme Right sympathises, notably South Africa, are not represented in anything other than pejorative terms by the media, precisely as the Left always say the working class are not represented, that strikers are not so represented, that Socialist countries are not so represented.

The difficulty, it seems to me, is that so much of this material goes over the heads of many of those gatherings of the Army of the Good, such as ourselves, who come together at conferences of this kind to discuss the problem of how society is affected by the media, and we never discuss what is being put out in that enormously wide spectrum concerned with entertainment: light entertainment, drama, and so on. There are programmes on British television about the struggle against pollution. We have to balance those not merely against other programmes which put the point of view of the companies concerned and say that the national products and the national growth rate and all these things are involved, but in those other programmes of a light weight fictional variety which make a hero of the man who is an oil magnate and the man who is a policeman, or whatever it may be. Because a certain number of received attitudes come through in that area also. And television, therefore, I would submit, can be a powerful reinforcing medium and its reinforcement is perhaps most effective in those areas where one is not looking for the political message or the didactic approach.

How should we react to this problem of the extent to which the television producer exercises his responsibility? I believe that there is a kind of uneasy community of interest amongst television producers in many countries. I do not believe, what Senator Gros said: that there is something unique in the Anglo-Saxon experience which means that we in Britain can operate one kind of system and perhaps other Anglo-Saxon countries can do the same, but this is not possible in Mediterranean countries, or in European countries with a rather shorter history in parliamentary democracy. If one looks at the way in which television journalists operate in a whole variety of countries, one sees common factors emerging. The one memory I take away from the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 is the fact that at the first opportunity Czech television journalists right across the board, people in drama and entertainment as well as those who put on the news and the people who went out to do the documentaries in depth – all of them began to behave in a way I recognized and to which I responded. They belonged essentially to a community of television broadcasting journalists and they behaved in a particular way which I did not think to be an international conspiracy, but rather the way in which broadcasters in all countries view the political establishment, the conventional wisdom, the orthodoxy of the society within which they operate, and I think it is healthy for them so to do. I believe it is equally true, or would be fully true if the obvious constraint were removed in the Soviet Union, and in Czechoslovakia, and in Greece, and in Spain and in France, and in Denmark and in Britain and in Holland and in every other country where I have had the privilege to meet people in my profession.

As far as Britain goes, I would be foolish to suggest to you that there are no political controls or constraints upon what can be said and what can be done. After some years of smugly sitting back and showing on British television *Le chagrin et le pitié* and saying oh well, the O.R.T.F. won't show that, and going to the cinema and watching *The Battle of Algiers*, we now have the problem of Northern Ireland, and we have already examples, as we have had throughout the whole history of broadcasting in Britain, of the very subtle relationship between the role of the state as the ultimate guarantor of broadcasting, and the broadcasters who try to

exercise the role which I have attempted to suggest to you and which broadcasters in most countries and most societies, of either the Right or the Left, attempt to assert. We have had very good coverage from Northern Ireland but there have been instances of programmes which have been put together – in my view accurately and sincerely, which represented a viewpoint at the extreme flank of the consensus of the day, which have been stopped because they alarmed all those who exercised power within the consensus of the day. If you put on a programme about the terrorists, the I.R.A., there is a possibility that it might be stopped; there is a possibility that people may find that it is not a suitable thing to put on at this moment. So it will be less than fair to suggest to you today that in Britain the political control is exercised at two or three removes and that there is no more influence than the sanction of the statute or the Act of Parliament which every six or ten years determines the future of the broadcasting authorities for another fixed and pre-determined period. There are these marginal interventions which remind us of the subtle relationship between broadcasting and government in a society like Britain.

What is coming in the immediate future in Britain which will alter this pattern? I have been active in the 1976 group which is concerned with the reform of the broadcasting structures in Britain by 1976. Essentially we are concerned with questions of access to the medium and of control. We are concerned to see that if there is – not a conspiracy indeed – but an excessive power in the hands of the broadcasting élite, given the broadcasting structure we have at the moment, that there should be countervailing power also. We have been concerned that there should be a Broadcasting Council which should hear complaints from the viewers about the interpretation of events, and more particularly of the way in which any individual is dealt with by the media. The B.B.C., in response partly to this, have set up their own complaints council of three elder statesmen who are sitting in judgment on complaints of this kind and have recently produced their first ruling in favour of a complaint. In my view this does not go far enough; I would much prefer to see a Broadcasting Council which included representatives of the viewers, and indeed of the broadcasters themselves, and not merely three elder statesmen of impeccable responsibility, but equally of impeccable orthodoxy drawn from the very safe centre of the political system.

Apart from this, we have to look at the question of wider access to new channels of communication. We have at the moment in Britain three channels on television. Two concerned with the B.B.C. which is now an immense organization employing 3,000 people and until very recently enjoying a monopoly in sound radio. On the other hand we have one channel for the confederal structure of Independent Television. It would be my hope that if we had a fourth channel of over-the-air broadcasting this should be used to give public access to precisely those groups whom one of our Belgian colleagues has mentioned. He said, why not have countervailing power built in by allowing access to the minorities, in this case access to those groups who wish to say that O.R.T.F. has got it wrong, or that the interpretation offered by the State at one remove through its broadcasting system has got it wrong. Although the British Broadcasting system is now pluralist, I would like to see this in Britain. I would like to see those many organizations who object for one reason or another to that interpretation of their affairs, which is shown on television – not merely on the news and the documentaries, but also in light entertainment and in drama – to have time to go on the air and to present a case; to make programmes in the way they want to make it. Alas most of the time this kind of request comes from politicians. It is the politicians' crusade. We havn't had enough time, we were cut off short, we only got ten minutes to put this very sophisticated case and there was this interviewer snarling and yapping at our heels the whole time. But you have to take that with a pinch of salt. The politicians have access anyway, the politicians can always get through to the system and they exercise the ultimate control over it. But there are many other groups in society who are at a disadvantage, who for one reason or another simply cannot present their case or simply do not see their point of view accurately represented by what comes back to them through television broadcasting. And for all of them I would like to see access to television through an independent television foundation which it seems to me would be a major improvement of the system we have in Britain.

Finally, the people are taking over television, in our country as elsewhere. The notion that the tight élite of professional broadcasters will continue to dominate the system will continue to pose such an assumed threat to the political process, to play such a sinister role in society as has been suggested so far, seems to me to overlook the remarkable speed with which the technological revolution has overtaken all of this. We have in Britain, beginning now, cable television stations. They are by no means yet as extensive or as influential as they are becoming in the United States and Canada. But it is a beginning and there will be more, and they will provide a means of access; a means of local participation; a method of bringing into the relationship between the viewer and the television programme all those participatory meaningful elements, which tend to be overlooked in the crisis-laden vocabulary of mass-audience television as we have developed it. There is hope in that, and there is equally hope in the kind of opportunities which are becoming open to us through satellite broadcasting. We in Britain look forward to the time when one, at least, of our channels will be a European channel, and we technically have the possibility of six over-the-air channels eventually. I think it is impossible to conceive of television in ten or fifteen years time as being tightly controlled within our national boundaries as it is at the moment. Television is going to be almost as internationalized as radio by 1980. There is a lot we have to learn by all of these new technologies in the way in which varying experiences can be put before the average viewer, because that is the role of television, to bring to the viewer all possible interpretations of society, not to extend the role of intermediary and sole interpreter to the point where the viewer is told what to think or is given one and one only selection, but is allowed to choose for himself. Thus the citizen could learn in his youth and in his school days – because he himself will one day be a parent – the way in which this process of selection can be used within the home and the medium used to its fullest adv[illegible]

2) Summary of Remarks made by Julian Critchley, M.P.:

Broadcasters are the first to claim unique powers for their medium. If so they must not complain when others not only draw attention to its failings, but also attempt to curb its powers.

Together with the family and the school, television makes up a triumvirate of influence. The state controls broadcasting, – the B.B.C. and the I.B.A. are licensed by Parliament, but there were those who were hostile to control per se, and others, who felt that what control there was, had been inadequately exercised.

There are four kinds of public anxiety, claimed Mr. Critchley. They are violence, sex, triviality and bias. There was also unease about the 'irresponsibility' of such large and powerful corporations, and a belief that here was one aspect of public life where 'consumer sovereignty' was non-existent.

People complained of two sorts of violence – the violence of real life (e.g. public executions) and fictionalised violence. Television as entertainment had tried to copy the American film industry's trend towards the portrayal of 'real violence' (e.g. *'Straw Dogs'* and *'The Devils'*), and to become impatient with the conventions of stylistic violence. This had been advocated by producers in the name of 'honesty'; it had been attacked by recipients as degrading, unnecessary, and capable of imitation. 'Man', claimed one critic, was being portrayed as nothing but 'a trousered ape'.

Sex on television had given rise to public anxiety, the spokesman of which in Britain was Mrs. Mary Whitehouse, a schoolmistress who had become a national figure. Her fears were as much to do with a more general criticism of declining moral standards; the 'permissiveness' of our times. The mechanics, and the consequences of sex, were freely discussed on the box, and often within a context of 'approval'. Sex, however, was rarely explicit, – the controls exercised by the broadcasting authorities were quite strictly drawn, but often implicit, particularly in B.B.C. drama, the themes of which have sometimes been of the more fashionable perversions. To Mrs. Whitehouse and her many supporters, television by virtue of its all-pervading influence had 'gone over to the other side'; and by its advocacy of libertarianism, it had slid into licence.

Triviality was a favourite complaint of two Socialist politicians, Richard Crossman and Anthony Wedgwood Benn. Television cut corners, it often failed to deal adequately with topics of some complexity. Mr. Benn has said the Trades Unions have never been fairly treated. What Crossman and Benn were *not* against was the 'politicisation' of telly; they complained it had not gone far enough.

On the other hand Conservative politicians – the late Iain Macleod was one – complained that not only does television carry too much politics, but it has also demonstrated its hostility, not to one political party, but to the 'system', – that is to liberal democracy. A younger generation of radical pundits and producers had entered television determined in the words of one of them, Gus Macdonald, the producer of Granada's *The World in Action* 'to change society' and 'to use television as a therapy for his indignation'. This hostility towards 'the establishment' was particularly marked at the time of the 1970 General Election. Many broadcasters, consciously or unconsciously reflected the Marxist belief that economics is more important than politics, for the election, in their eyes, was a sham, and the choice bogus.

Mr. Critchley claimed that in the last two years, editorial control over television, in response to public pressure, had been considerably tightened up. Some producers were claiming "censorship", but he welcomed it. The B.B.C. and I.B.A. have a duty imposed upon them by Parliament to strive for impartiality; on social matters the standards set could only be subjective, but they should be those of the educated middle class. Mr. Critchley did not believe in the divine right of broadcasters.

A period of considerable social change had placed the broadcasting authorities in a difficult position. But public concern was vitally important, if the leaders of the broadcasting concerns were not, in the name of freedom, to give gratuitous offence to a great many of their customers.

Politicians of all parties were in favour of the setting up of a 'Broadcasting Council' – a forum independent of the B.B.C. and I.B.A., where the aggrieved individual, or organisation, could get redress.

The Impact of Television Information on Teachers and Pupils

By Lucien Géminard, Director, Institut National de Recherche et de Documentation Pédagogiques, Paris.

Is it really possible to make any deduction affecting education and the teacher from the factor of "information" taken in isolation?

On the one hand, schools and teachers cover a wide field of phenomena. They are affected by the evolution of social values, of technological civilisation and of the use of information and other data. On the other hand, we have to think of the influence of information and, in particular, of televised information broadcast for the public as a whole. Education is a complex of many factors, factors which are not, I believe, variables independent of one another. Public information on the other hand is one single factor. Is it possible to discuss teaching education and teachers confronted with contemporary problems, if we restrict the subject to the factor of information alone? That is the first question.

Reflection on this subject leads us to examine it under four heads. First the technological, economic and institutional aspect; secondly the pedagogic aspects in the broad educational sense; thirdly the pupil's aptitude to receive and understand the messages which are broadcast, and the teachers' reactions to these messages; and lastly the psychology of the intelligence and the structure of perception in children subjected to the phenomenon of television.

The impact of technology

As for the first, technological, economic and institutional aspect of the matter, I believe that the debate about the values which can be derived from modern techniques is unreal. We hear a lot about whether technology is a blessing or a curse. That is not the question. Technology is neutral so far as moral values are concerned. But, as the word itself implies, technology creates a logical framework of development for society and we cannot escape from it. This framework has its influence upon people's behaviour and on the evolution of their mentality; an evolution which proceeds at a very different rate as between one social group and another. This logic of technical civilisation affects a great many phenomena, information among others; and it is a mistake to speak of information on its own, without placing it within the framework of this logic of the prevailing human-mechanical system. For instance, the logical consequence of the technique of printing, combined with some ordinary human attitudes (such as "the law of least effort") has led quite naturally to the production of divers publications according to the reading public and level for which each is intended, whether general newspapers, specialised journals or books. People choose what they want to read, according to their own level of culture. That is a logical consequence of the relation between a technique and human attitudes. Television, on the other hand, pours out information without any distinction between its various viewers and hearers, even when several channels are in operation. Everyone listens to the same message, whatever his intellectual level or his age. Here we have a logic which is not simply the result of choice by the producer; it is bound to the economic requirement of the exploitation of the technical means available. One must not, I think, lose sight of the framework created by the constraints which necessarily arise from the operation of particular techniques. Nor is the effect of television on viewers independent of their way of life or the homes in which they live. The same message of information in broadcasts, whether of daily news or of fundamental interest, certainly has not the same effect upon pupils and teachers received, say, in a French village or in a large urban centre.

In other words, if the information itself can be isolated, the effects of the information cannot be isolated from the conditions of its reception. The way in which teachers receive this information is conditioned not only by urban life, the technology of the broadcast and its content. Its effect is linked also to their own ideological commitments, to their relations with official authorities and, even in a country with a centralised educational system like France, to a diversity of pedagogical ideas.

So this first series of reflections (on the technical aspects of our subject) leads to an impasse regarding the possibility of defining the influence of information as a distinct factor. For the next part of this paper it has been necessary to coordinate the results of research undertaken by the *Institut National de Recherches Pédagogiques*, some enquiries undertaken by public opinion polls, such as C.O.F.R.E.M.C.A. in France, and work done in U.N.E.S.C.O., the Council of Europe, the Atlantic Alliance and in Northern and English-speaking countries.

The Problem of the Pedagogue

Let us now consider the subject from the standpoint of pedagogy in general. Pedagogy in its proper meaning – "I lead a child" – includes the whole of the educational system, that is to say, its administrative, financial and material structures and their equipment, the content of knowledge and the psychological relations between master and pupil. (One cannot lead a child without knowing what family he belongs to, whence he comes, how he is clothed, whither it is intended to lead him, what are the climate, the time and means of leading him.) What do we see in this sphere? We can start by studies of comparative pedagogy defining its hypotheses and the contexts in which it is placed. In some of our countries the emphasis is placed on the socialisation of the adolescent: in others on the acquisition of knowledge. The attitude of teachers to television and general information will be very different in these two groups of countries. In some countries the pedagogue makes use, sometimes implicitly, of the results of theories of learning and of those which derive

from "behaviourism". In others – and in particular in France – it is upon genetic psychology (the school of Piaget) and on the problems of intellectual development that stress is laid rather than upon the problems of socialisation. Clearly one must add to these characteristics of prevailing tendencies all those that concern the typical pupil and the kind of teaching given in order to determine the real effect of information upon the teaching and upon the teacher.

This said, there are some general observations to be made from the standpoint of European teachers for whom the purpose of education is the acquisition of knowledge and of an intellectual formation. In the first place, what is the impact of the visual image broadcast by television? In the physical and technological sciences this image, in the view of many teachers, tends to diminish the pupil's effort to build up his knowledge. The visual presentation in fact gives an impression of easy understanding: but it is often a false understanding limited to the level of appearances (vulgarisation and education confused). It has also the further disadvantage of debauching the subject in advance. Teachers find it hard to arouse the pupil's interest in a course of teaching which goes from the simple to the complex; and, inversely, they find it difficult, in the natural sciences, to construct knowledge when starting from the complex, as they try to incorporate in their teaching the tele-visual phenomenon. Some educators go even further and say that television, because it encourages the attitude of a mere spectator, spoils the behaviour of students in experimental work in the laboratory. They no longer like to manipulate simple instruments because they think it childish. To learn what a mass is by means of scales when one has seen a television programme on interplanetary travel may indeed seem ridiculously archaic, and all the skill of the pedagogue is needed to reconvert his students to a traditional scientific process. True, the pedagogue may be led to new ways of imparting knowledge and that is all to the good. But he may well be unsuccessful: for instance how is one to start experimentally from the weightless state in order to reintroduce the notion of gravitational masses and weights?

A second point to notice is that information of the "journalistic" type does not reconstruct the context of events or mention the relevant hypotheses or postulates; consequently hearers and viewers, if they are very young, or not competent, can suffer from a great deal of confusion between the themes and the levels on which these themes are studied or approached. This creates an intellectual disorder with which the teacher is affronted or confronted, and it is difficult to put any order into all that has been heard and seen on the T.V. set. The way in which the pupil receives the information (at home, for example, with comments by his parents) also affects the extent of his intellectual confusion. In general, it can be said that, in view of these two observations, many teachers, in France at least, deplore the loss of intellectual effort by pupils. They say that television as a mass medium of visual information tends to develop a general taste for choosing the easiest way.

There are, however, positive advantages in the use of audio-visual techniques, if we leave aside, for the moment, general television broadcasts. The encouragement which they give to pedagogic reflection and to an effort to recreate the process of teaching is important. For instance; having concluded that, in the sphere of civics and history, current affairs broadcasts do not lead to a real understanding, some teachers have tried to provide their students with instruments of intellectual reflection and to develop their use of critical methods, by using a short silent film on an historical event as a training exercise in visual study. The silent film is given two entirely different commentaries. For instance at the Lycée de Saint Quentin a silent film was made on the reign of Henry IV, and it was accompanied by one highly laudatory commentary and then by one which was highly critical, saying that his reign had been lamentable. The students were then invited to take part in a critical debate in order to decide which of the two commentaries was the less false historically. For this purpose they had written papers to read and could ask for reference documents when they needed them.

Some educational films have also had remarkable technical consequences, thanks to the mastery of time, the mastery of space and what one might call the suppression of the opacity of an object. For instance a three minute film on the Kangaroo in natural science shows the leaps of the Kangaroo, then the successive positions of the animal are juxtaposed on the same picture, and next its skeleton is superimposed on each. Here we have a combination of attitudes which succeeded one another in time and which did not occur in the same place, and the object is made transparent so that what would normally be difficult to show can be grasped. Such a use of technique was perhaps suggested by films of sporting events, showing athletes in slow motion followed by a continuation of the photography. A television programme for the general public can perfect devices of this kind thanks to funds which are not yet available for school television.

Finally, we must consider the relation between master and pupil in the classroom. And here we mean the "classroom system" of our schools and not classes in which individual teaching is given, or in which the form has been reorganised in groups of different levels and with different teaching methods according to subject. Undoubtedly in the "classroom system" T.V. information creates tensions and difficulties which are felt acutely by some teachers. But how much of this is due to the information itself, and how much to the changed way of life reflected in the students' behaviour? In fact particularly in our large towns since May 1968 many students are most aggressive and even coarse and brutal in the way they address their teachers. It is not unusual in class to see a student, boy or girl, sharply interrupt the teacher as he is talking and say something like this "Sir (or Madam) what you say has absolutely no interest for us. You have just told us this, but the T.V. last evening showed us that? Can you explain why?" Very often the unfortunate teacher is taken aback by this rude interruption. He does not always know what answer to give, perhaps because he had not seen the T.V. item himself. Or else he cannot think on the spur of the moment of an answer suited to the level of his pupils. Teachers are thus greatly troubled in mind, and some doctors diagnose this as a serious phenomenon. Consequences of this state of affairs can be observed in the centres for teaching by correspondence. The teachers seconded to these centres have hitherto usually been people of a certain age, or ill. But for about four years now candidates for appointment as teachers in these correspondence centres have been young teachers,

often between 25 and 28 years of age. They stay at the centre for one, two or three years, then return to their schools but sometimes, after another two or three years, apply to be seconded once again for work in the correspondence centre. This is a fairly new development which is, it seems, linked to the difficulties of the teacher-pupil relationship and is more marked among beginners in the teaching profession. This leads us to place the influence of "information" in a wider context.

Influence of television on the pupil

The third aspect of the matter which calls for reflection is the influence of televised information on the student and particularly on his understanding of the messages purporting to convey knowledge. In the sphere of physical science when an object is shown on the screen, that object – to use a technical expression – is an objective agent, and the producer who presents it puts very little of himself into the presentation. This is the case, for example, of a surgical operation shown on a closed television circuit. It remains objective: and in that case the acquisition and understanding of knowledge is possible, and possible objectively. But whenever the attempt is made to present ideas and concepts on television there are great difficulties to surmount. It is possible to use symbolic images, but such images do not amount to a real language. The pictures do not form meaningful units, because the same visual expressions are not used systematically when the same concepts have to be recalled and represented. In short the subjectivity of the producer and the film-maker play an important part. If the teacher wants to use such programmes without knowing the "code" of the producer, the resulting situation involves, on the one hand, the subjectivity of the listener/viewer and, on the other, the subjectivity of the telecaster. What is the relation between these two worth? From the pedagogic standpoint the control of the acquisition of knowledge no longer makes sense. Indeed one wonders whether such subjective relations of interpretation do not sink to the level of a bad kind of vulgarisation. The attitude of some young students of good family, who want to solve their personal problems of life by transferring them bodily to the organisation of society, may well be partly due to this phenomenon. Indeed it seems that the excess of technological environment becomes oppressive for many young people; confronted with a complex and over-scientific society with its multiplicity of technical media, they yield to the temptation of the irrational.

Television and the child's perception

What finally is the impact of television on the build-up of a child's capacity of perception, on his intellectual development and that of his affections, of which the development of intelligence is not independent? These themes which have been treated by McLuhan and others are extremely difficult. It is almost impossible to answer these questions as yet because the generation formed by televisual information is still very young and has not lasted for more than ten, twelve or thirteen years. But it is a problem which may in the future bring about great change in the field of education. It remains to be seen whether television in general will not prove to be a most effective means to promote what one might call the intellectual mobility of teachers. There is no profession in which one becomes more hardened in habits and attitudes; and, in an age when there must be continuous adaptation, there is a great need to maintain this intellectual mobility. It is possible that television, were it to be concerned with the teachers' world, could play an important part in that process.

Can School and Television Complement One Another?

By Recteur Henri Gauthier, Ministry of Education, Paris.

Whether we like it or not, televised news and information have an influence upon pupils. That is a fact of which, whether he approves or deplores it, the teacher must take account in the course of his teaching. But I must say that, from the experience of our teachers in this country, the schoolmaster cannot always be happy about television; he often finds it to be a rival, imperfect no doubt, but still a serious rival. He realizes that he is no longer, as he once was, the only dispenser of knowledge; he has to admit that a great mass of information comes from outside the school, and in particular from information on the television. He also knows that this information is fragmented and superficial, incomplete and often detached from its context, and yet that it offers the pupil an easy, agreeable kind of teaching, which he can assimilate without much effort. Indeed, because of this, the very notion of making an effort to acquire knowledge tends to vanish from the pupil's mind and the teacher has to undertake the task of restructuring and reconstructing the intellectual process. In fact there seems to be a conflict between academic wisdom, carefully built up and set in order, but cut off, as it seems to the student, from life and practical realities, and another kind of vulgarised knowledge which is lively and topical, calls for no effort and is much more pleasant to acquire.

I think it would be a pity that these two ways of acquiring knowledge should be in opposition and rivalry to one another. To avoid this teachers must draw their own lesson from the facts, and television producers, on their side, must realize that they have a mission to fulfil and that they should perhaps re-think the way in which they present information to the public. There should be a mutual effort made and research undertaken with a view to replacing this duality and rivalry with an endeavour to support and complement one another.

If television news and information have caused the teacher some trouble, there is no doubt that they are also of great value to him. They oblige him to re-think his teaching, to ask himself if it is given in the best form and the best way, if its content itself is relevant to the present day or whether it should not be cleared of superfluous detail. I believe that these considerations will lead the teacher to new and healthy experiments; in particular his teaching will have to begin with the concrete before approaching the abstract, to proceed from complex facts to what is simple and explicable. In France our teaching has suffered a lot from abstraction. Today the teaching of physics can no longer follow the familiar course; but the same laws have to be learnt.

I also feel that television compels the teacher to revise his ways of evaluating and controlling knowledge in school. For if there is progress in the method and content of teaching and if, after being forbidding to the pupil, it becomes pleasant, the ways and means of assessing his knowledge change very little. No doubt examinations must be retained, but their conditions must be altered. So it is good for the teacher to take account of current news and information on the T.V. as far as possible, but not to allow himself to be guided by the disconnected happenings of the news. It is simply not feasible that in all school subjects the current affairs information broadcast on the T.V. last night should serve as the basis or even the point of departure for today's teaching. This would be all the more difficult because it is not always the most important or significant events which are televised. The schoolmaster can, of course, introduce topical information into his teaching and should do so when he can. He must start with concrete, up-to-date facts whenever possible, but his main task is always to put some order and precision into the current affairs retailed on television, to make the student understand that he cannot make sense of the facts or of technological achievements without knowing a certain number of fundamental scientific data which are necessary in order to comprehend, let alone master, the elements of the world which surrounds us; an extremely difficult task.

This means that the master must teach his pupils to become critical and inquisitive listeners and viewers. He will be of service to the television organisation in providing it with a more intelligent audience, with listeners who are no longer content to be impotent recipients of topical information and to absorb a message passively but who will want to be participating listeners. On his side the newscaster or reporter of information ought to serve the truth as objectively as possible in clear, precise, if not distinguished language, which is not always the case. It would also be a good thing if in reporting a course of events the reporter could refer to the need of some fundamental knowledge in order to understand the significance of the information which he is giving. I believe that it is from this interchange between teachers on one side and, on the other, reporters, journalists and other purveyors of information, whether in the press, on radio, or on television, that the young, who are our special concern, will derive most profit from this inestimable source of the diffusion of knowledge which is now an integral part of our world and which we could not now do without.

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A General Debate

Impressions of a Round Table discussion, chaired by Louis François, Inspector-General, Ministry of Education, Paris.

Is there an essential incompatibility between televised information and teaching, Louis François asked in opening the discussion, or could they be wedded for the benefit of the pupil? The different types of this information, he added, must be distinguished. There was the daily news which came over higgledy-piggledy. There was the reporting of great events (e.g. the assassination of President Kennedy). There were documentaries on international questions which could well be used and followed up in class. There was the sharing of epoch-making developments in human affairs such as man's journeys to the moon or great medical and surgical discoveries; and these certainly belonged to the field of education.

The teacher's task, in Dr. Meijer's view, was to distinguish the content from the form of T.V. material and seek to adapt it to preparation for life. "If schools see themselves as sources of current information" said James Becker, "theirs is a losing battle": they have to teach pupils how to use this knowledge, or, as Gerald Fleming put it, to help them to come to terms with reality. Louis François had suggested in this connection that T.V. information was not infrequently propagandist but Robert Gillman, himself a television news editor, denied that, though T.V. news was organised in a hurry, it was impossible to analyse the news: impartiality and objectivity were his aim.

The meeting went on to discuss how to use and, when necessary correct, the impact of T.V. reporting of current affairs in the school. Dr. Schütze spoke of the tendency to exaggerate the importance of great events: it was necessary to remember the mass of little daily happenings. Sensationalism was a danger, but Dr. Meijer observed that there was too great a tendency in lessons to treat all subjects in an anodyne way. It was not possible not to speak of the vicious: all is not for the best in this life. On the question of method, Louis François considered that it was primarily for history and geography teachers to adapt themselves to the explanation of current affairs, for in this way their pupils take more interest in geography or history. For instance in teaching about the geography of Czechoslovakia it would be impossible to ignore the events of 1968–1972.

The home should help, said a parent, in interpreting the news; for there is the time and means in the family to help children to get at the truth. What was needed, René La Borderie said, was to equip pupils to place the T.V. in its proper perspective: the audio-visual language must be understood. Mademoiselle Bonnot raised the constant question of how to work the teaching or discussion of current affairs into the crowded school time-table. Must it not be the job of an independent teacher? Mr. Mertens, regarding this as an evolution of history teaching, was for the organization of discussions out of class and M. La Borderie, Mr. Gillman and other members spoke in favour of debates based on T.V. news.

Upon this there was much division of opinion. Monsieur Coulon and others being opposed to altering the regular programme of education; for them the history teacher was the one properly concerned with contemporary history.

The aptitude of the teacher to deal with current affairs was much debated. Mr. Van Santbergen considered that he needed moral preparation in order to fulfil this task without propaganda. Faced with the plethora and rapidity of televised information, which may well lead to youngsters losing interest, the Chairman said it was for the teacher to act as a guide. But was he equipped to do so? What was needed, in Dr. Henderson's view was the systematic training of primary and secondary teachers for this purpose, because current affairs now were at best a peripheral subject in most schools. The teacher, having regard to the age group of pupils, should be a mediator in his interpretation of current events and, he argued, the teacher will only enjoy credit with his students if he is himself politically committed. On the other hand, there is a danger in the politicisation of teaching. If the teacher has to take up a subjective attitude, he is vulnerable to the criticism of parents, as Mr. Forrester pointed out. It was not however, he said, so much the content of this teaching as the methodology which mattered. T.V. information was produced in a hurry; but the school was not in a hurry. If a T.V. news broadcast could be played back as an historical document it would encourage the development of critical faculties.

The question of politics in current affairs teaching is evidently a very thorny subject upon which opinion was divided. While some attached importance to political education, others, like Mr. Santbergen, felt that ethics should not be forgotten and that international life had its place in courses of religious teaching; and Dr. Meijer favoured the integration of disciplines – social science, religion, history etc – to increase the interest in world affairs. It was also important to avoid opposition between the home and the school in these matters. Evidently, said Mr. Gillman, what this conference is worried about is politics, not television, and mentioned the care with which I.T.V. school programmes are prepared a year in advance. It was, however, with the impact of general T.V. news and information programmes on teaching about contemporary affairs in the school that this conference was concerned and discussion was brought down to earth by a French parent, who referred to the degeneration of the atmosphere in many schools since 1968, and by the Chairman, who admitted the ugly fact that the majority of teachers in France avoided touching public questions for fear of disorder from militant students.

Such fears were not voiced by members from other countries. Mr. Becker, for instance, had welcomed the integration of the school in the community. Society itself, he said, has become a teaching machine. It was a good thing to bring in businessmen and other experts from outside to discuss matters of public interest with students. Professor Fasciotti emphasized that it was not possible to air all political opinions in school: much

depended on the democratic spirit of the teacher. For Professor de Campos Tavares, while the impact of T.V. information called for an adaptation of teaching methods, it was necessary for the teacher to relate them to the tradition and spirit of the national community to which the school belonged. It was agreed, in conclusion that whether or not current affairs were treated in separate extra-curricular talks and debates, or in the regular school programme, as most members seemed to prefer, the powerful influence of T.V. required a change of educational method.

Conclusions

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1. Report of Discussion Group on The Problem in the Classroom

Chairmen: Lucien Géminard and Jacqueline Néré (France)
Rapporteur: Gérard Caty (Canada)

Group No. 1 was asked to study the problem of the relationship between television and the school.

After a preliminary discussion, the following plan was adopted:

I **Information provided by television**
a) Information received by the teachers,
b) Information received by the pupils/students.

II **Interaction between the two groups.**

III **The positive aspects of information provided by television.**

Finally the Group attempted to draw some conclusions.

I **Information provided by television**
a) Information received by the teachers.

It is accepted that teachers approach information received on the basis of reasoned assessment, although this does not mean that their interpretation is uniform, as each person confers on it his own originality.

It is obvious that the teacher should avoid at all costs any enslavement to information techniques he is unable to master; this presupposes an adequate knowledge of the uses of these techniques on his part.

The teacher in the classroom must retain his freedom and responsibility for the interpretation of the documentation. Thus, for example, the use of atomic energy in all its consequences may be held out by some as the condition *sine qua non* for peace in the world and by others as something fundamentally wrong and dangerous.

However the Group wonders whether all teachers are always flexible and open-minded enough to assimilate rapidly the daily flow of information, often difficult to apprehend in all its complexity. The Group fears the effect of total rejection of televised current affairs which would result in crippling the teacher, isolating him from his environment and making him professionally inadequate.

On the other hand, the proper use of information transmitted by television seems to be an effective means for the teacher in creating a centre of common interest bringing him closer to his pupils and making his teaching more effective.

b) Information received by the pupils/students

It has been established that whenever the family unit and the school play a less important role in the life of the adolescent, the influence of television increases, but the full effect of this has as yet to be determined.

The same item of televised information is not perceived in an identical fashion by children of the same age, even less so by children of different ages. The centres of interest in television broadcasts depend upon complex and little-understood combinations of sensations, aspirations and outlook.

It seems to the Group that in the majority of cases the child cannot and will not explain to an adult the problems created for him by the world of moving images. It seems necessary, therefore, that the teacher should be required to help the child to a greater mastery of this new phenomenon – against which he cannot defend himself – and which threatens to alienate, change or stifle his personality.

II **Interaction between teachers and students**

a) The Group asserts that at present information exists only in an "uncontrolled" state: a kaleidoscope of events, presented crudely and rapidly, where violence is one of the principal features. This information leaves behind transitory, confused and profound traces with the adolescent who reacts in various ways: the flight from reality, the pursuit of extravagant dreams, and, more frequently, the break with his immediate environment.

In these circumstances the teacher's task becomes much more difficult with, in some cases, increased problems of communication.

It is vital, therefore, that the teacher should attempt to remove some of the magic from the all-powerful image, an unchallengable source of truth for the child.

He can do this by analysing the televised reality in whatever way suits him best (films, investigations, newspaper reports).

b) Far from thrusting aside certain images of current events, he must integrate current events into the calmer perspective of his teaching (the events are so varied that no specialisation is excluded).

c) In particular, in order to foster such reflections, he must have at his disposal modern audio-visual methods of reproduction and transmission which are simple to operate and reliable.

Of course he can ask the advice of an expert in communications. We are still feeling our way in this field which requires the collaboration of the television systems, the family, the pupils, the students, the teaching body, the medical profession, etc . . .

III The positive aspects of information provided by television

This report would obviously be too pessimistic unless one returned for a moment before concluding to the positive aspects of information provided by television, recognized in a previous paragraph as "an effective means for the teacher in creating a centre of common interest bringing him closer to his pupils and making his teaching more effective".

The negative aspects of information provided by television, underlined above, will not conceal its positive aspects to the extent that the audio-visual achievement is considered scientifically and its significance explained. The risks of alienation referred to will then disappear and give way to a critical attitude.

In this context it is important to encourage and develop all research on the semiology of audio-visual language, and to experiment with and then develop methods of teaching this language in schools.

Conclusion

The Group wonders whether, as a matter of urgency, the question should not be posed as to the relationship between current events presented daily by television and the instruction which is given in schools.

It asserts that televised current events must inevitably conform to certain rules of speed, of seeking for effect in the presentation of information, which leads to the encouragemeng of sensationalism.

On the other hand it is obvious that any censorship would be useless; after all it is practically impossible to impose a selection of broadcasts on the child.

Consequently, there is a loss of innocence and a change in the centres of interest which must be taken into account. It would be desirable, therefore, for radio and television to provide a calmer complement of information to counterbalance the sensational whenever this is shown to be necessary.

It is advisable that the child should be given the means of living in harmony with the present.

In any case it seems to us impossible to reject the phenomenon of television and its impact on young people. The training of teachers should take this into account. It appears necessary to draw inspiration from the positive experiments carried out in certain countries and to introduce new programmes of study in order to teach children and teachers to benefit educationally from the information provided daily, in the interests of better international understanding.

2. Report of Discussion Group on the Problem for the Television Producer

Chairman: Robert V. Gillman (U.K.)
Rapporteurs: Dr. Gerhard Vogel (West Germany)
Dr. Hans-Jürgen Daus (West Germany)

PART ONE

The Role of the News and Current Affairs Producer

1. To find out how much money is available.

2. To determine the nature of the equipment required.

3. To hire the right staff. T.V. news is a job for professionals, just as surely as medicine or the law.

4. To organize in such a way that no significant news stories will be missed.

5. To ensure absolute integrity and authority – there is no point in producing a news programme at all unless viewers can trust it.

6. To comply with the law yet be on the look-out for any abuse by authority.

7. To make certain that information is presented unbiased and in a way which viewers will understand. If any views are to be expressed the viewer must know they are views and not necessarily facts, and their source. The same thing applies to reports of doubtful authenticity. If wrong information is broadcast, whatever the reason, make sure that viewers are aware the producer knows a mistake has been made. Even small errors, unless publicly corrected, can destroy faith in a news programme.

8. Not to suppress news because one disagrees with it. The viewer is entitled to information on which he can make his own decisions.

9. To make sure staff understand these objectives and present news in a way viewers will want to watch.

10. To remember that selection – and omission – of news reports is just as important as their treatment.

11. To try to produce a news bulletin which is balanced in every possible way. Happy stories are just as significant as tragedies. The world does not consist entirely of disasters and crises.

12. To remind one's newscasters they are not actors or preachers. A pleasant smile is invaluable, as long as it is in the right place, but the viewer does not want to know what the newscaster thinks of the news – he just wants to know what is happening.

13. To remember that the audience will vary with the time of day. A report prepared for a late night bulletin is not necessarily suitable for transmission during early evening.

14. Above all to be fair and not to become personally involved. To remember there are at least two sides to everything, and that almost everyone involved in news stories has his own interest to consider. A party politician is partisan, members of professional bodies stick together and anyone without responsibility will always find it easier to comment than those charged with making decisions.

Obvious problems

1. How to decide which topics to include and which to ignore.

2. How to produce a news programme which will interest viewers, which will be absolutely clear, will be fair and will provide the information they need. If opinions are expressed, making certain the viewer knows whose opinions they are.

3. How to convince people, many of them influential, that there can be no departure from your own standards and principles.

4. How much freedom to give individual members of staff. Too much control results in a uniform greyness which viewers will switch off.

5. How to recognize significant developments in their early stages and to ensure film crews are at the right place at the right time.

6. How best to spend the money and resources at the producer's disposal.

PART TWO

Some problems concerning the production of school television programmes

The producer of school television programmes has to make:

1. an analysis of the subject he wants to teach (he has to decide on the objectives of the programme, controversial issues about the subject and background information, and he should do it in an open-ended manner so that students can discuss and decide for themselves; if the school television producer has his own opinion on a subject he should show the different sides),

2. a penetrating analysis of his target group, both students and teachers, its intellectual, social and cultural background, the learning situation and the limiting factors in the classroom,

3. an analysis of presentation techniques.

The role of the television producer seems to be defined as that of a mediator between the subject and the target audience.

The form of presentation is closely connected with the target group. That will determine the type of concept, the general approach, the kind of presentation and the level of language, i.e. if he uses an elaborate or restricted code. Closely connected with these items is, secondly, the analysis of the subject he wants to teach which should be in accordance with the curricula set up by specialist groups and the school authorities and with this we have already mentioned the third point, stressing the necessity of analysing the form of presentation (the methodology).

In some countries it is possible to select the most suitable medium to each learning item. In a multi-media system the producer of educational programmes can choose from among different media: television is most suitable for subjects which can easily be visualised and which have a topical character; in a radio programme we can offer subjects of abstract character, and in books all learning items can be stored and additional information can be obtained. So we have to stress the changing role of the teacher who does not give all the information but has to organize the learning in a multi-media approach.

The producer of educational programmes thinks that the best way is to offer a multi-media system which is presented in a series of programmes so that he is not forced – as is the case with producers of news programmes – to say the maximum in the minimum of time. On the contrary, in educational programmes the number of learning items should be strictly limited so that the viewer is able to understand it. This, however, is closely connected with another point – school programmes should not be too complex, there should always be a coherent theme running through the programme so that the student can follow it.

Because television is a very young medium, producers believe that a subject in schools called "Communications" as here defined should be a normal part of the school curriculum. We feel it essential that students should learn how to use the media and that they should have a more and more critical view of them. The visual media do not lend themselves to the kind of abstract analysis employed in the study of written prose. Pictorial representation communicates to the viewer a great deal more information of a social and cultural nature than can be readily described by an abstract idea. Not only can words lie but also visual media. People have to learn how to read images and then they will be able on their own to distinguish lies from truth. Since no programme can be entirely objective, all students should know the elementary facts of audio-visual language and how it is put together in order to detect any possible bias.

Since television producers have many problems regarding the effects of television programmes, research should be done in this field.

Research should also be done in the field of feedback. Tests for school programmes are necessary to see if their learning items have been grasped by the students. The results should be used to improve programmes so that when they are transmitted for a second time the student can see a new and better version.

More consultation with teachers is desirable.

3 Report of Discussion Group on the Objectivity Factor

Chairman: Professor J. Logsdon (U.S.A.)
Rapporteur: Miss G. P. Mowat (U.K.)

The report is presented in four sections:

1. Definition of Objectivity.
2. Objectivity in Television Production.
3. Objectivity of the Teacher.
4. Conclusions for the Teacher.

1. Definition of Objectivity

While accepting that perfect objectivity, either in television presentation of news and current affairs or on the part of the teacher, is an unattainable goal, the group attempted to find a realistic definition of objectivity. In detail at least, the interpretation of objectivity varies as between programme producer and presenter and teacher, those concerned with different stages in the production, adult and child, the more or the less interested or motivated viewer. Each has his personal set of values. However the following definition of objectivity was accepted by the entire group:

"Objectivity consists in the ability to view a problem however crucial or controversial, from as many different sides as possible and then to indicate a personal declaration of intention regarding its treatment without striving to impose that intention upon others".

Their experience of the divisions in society and their family and social conditioning from an early age influence the way people, especially young people, approach television. The precise definition of objectivity must vary for each person.

2. Objectivity in Television Production

The objectivity of a television news bulletin can be judged by the extent to which reporters and producers adhere to the facts of a situation. It is accepted that these may be difficult to uncover and that they lack the wisdom of hindsight. In the case of programmes designed to comment, the objectivity rests with the producer and to a lesser extent with the presenter to elucidate the truth. However the investigating documentary programmes presented by a strong or colourful personality is not necessarily far from the general consensus of objectivity provided intellectual honesty motivates all concerned. It is therefore important to know the producer's and the presenter's point of view.

The general level of objectivity in television programmes reflects the values of a society. The possibility of any programme taking account of the various opinions within a pluralist society depends on whether that society is truly democratic or not. To the extent to which the government controls broadcasting authorities its acceptance of democratic principles is essential.

3. Objectivity of the Teacher

The teacher's role in the use of television is twofold

i) to put a programme into its wider context
ii) to develop in his pupils the skill of critical assessment of programmes.

Obviously it is more difficult for the teacher who lacks a thorough knowledge of the topic under discussion to ensure that his own presentation of it is objective. He is influenced by his own particular background. He may hold strong beliefs concerning certain issues and in this case it would be difficult, if indeed it is desirable, for him not to show his commitment. The group felt that in many instances it might be better for him to do so provided that this does not prevent him from giving his students the opportunity to study the facts from as many angles as possible and from drawing their own conclusions based on their findings. The teacher's role is to enable his students to develop the skill of looking at television. Television portrayal of our environment is a contemporary document. He must provide them with the necessary tools to enable them to detect, understand and offset bias. The medium cannot be tamed or made objective. Constructive criticism of programmes by students is desirable. Where students are used to this there may be times when they will reach a consensus more easily by discussion within their peer group, with no teacher present.

4. Conclusions for the Teacher

It has been estimated that most people will spend about 10% of their whole life watching television. Television provides both consciously and subconsciously a lifelong continous education for all.

The teacher should consider the following stages in developing in his pupils a critical awareness of the advantages and limitations of the mass media:

i) an ability to detect undue bias in programmes by testing the information given against known and accepted facts,

ii) an ability to appreciate the causal relationships resulting in a lack of objectivity – in particular
a) that the individual reporter's relationship to an event and the influence of his social, political and cultural background may be reflected in his report,
b) that the producer and/or presenter may cut or rearrange material so altering the objectivity,
c) that the technical limitations imposed by the medium and the time pressures necessarily present, impose precise but non-subjective biases on any programme;

iii) an ability to draw his own conclusions on the basis of the facts presented and to state them,

vi) an ability to accept the possibility of a diversity of opinion.

This training must begin at an early age by children being encouraged to check information. In some countries training in the use of mass media, including television, begins between the ages of 12 and 14. The inclusion of such courses appropriate to the age group and ability of pupils in the curricula of all young people is strongly recommended.

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